# GLOUCESTERMEN

JAMES B. CONNOLLY

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## JAMES B. CONNOLLY

*SHORT STORIES*

STEEL DECKS

TIDE RIPS

RUNNING FREE

HEAD WINDS

SONNIE-BOY'S PEOPLE

WIDE COURSES

OPEN WATER

THE CRESTED SEAS

THE DEEP SEA'S TOLL

OUT OF GLOUCESTER

*NOVELS*

THE SEINERS

JEB HUTTON

HIKER JOY

THE TRAWLER

THE U-BOAT HUNTERS

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

# Gloucestermen

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## Stories of the Fishing Fleet

By

James B. Connolly

NEW YORK
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MCMXXX

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# PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This collection brings together in one volume Mr. Connolly's own selection of his famous sea stories of the Gloucester Fishing Fleet, until now available only in seven volumes, including stories never before published in book form.

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# Gloucestermen

# I

## A CHASE OVERNIGHT

The Gloucester seining fleet had been cruising to the westward of Georges Bank, when one of those New England north-easters came swooping down on them. Thereupon, as nothing was to be gained by hanging on (you cannot set for mackerel in a gale), every vessel in the fleet made fast her dory in the waist, looked to the painter of the seine-boat astern, and then the whole seventy or eighty seiners took on a beautiful slant and made a roaring regatta of it to Provincetown, the nearest port of refuge.

In the early morning hours this gale had struck in. It was somewhere along in the middle of the afternoon when the first of the fleet showed their noses past the little light-house that marks the entrance to the harbor of Provincetown. One after the other they came leaping past the light. It was a quick look to see how things lay, a haul over for one last leg, a rush across the harbor, a shoot into the wind, and then, after the fashion of tired gulls with wet wings, a lowering of sodden sails and a thankful settling into handy anchorages.

By dusk of this stormy day most of the seining fleet were safely in. Of this Provincetown was soon made aware, for among these ten or twelve hundred robust fishermen there had to be the inevitable boisterous percentage with some tormenting energy to work off and with no desire to be hushed. Such started in at sundown; and from then on, until dawn of next morning in many cases, they did what they could to keep that staid hamlet from drifting into a too early sleep.

But, after all, only a small number of the fishermen were of the riotous kind. The greater part, indeed, were sensible men, who preferred to stay aboard their own vessel for the evening, or to drop over and see an old shipmate or two on some other craft near by. These knew of old the delights of a fo'c's'le night in a snug harbor, with no watch to keep, no work to do; where you have only to talk or listen, to "smoke up" and "mug up"; to keep your pipe going and to help yourself to hot coffee off the stove and good grub out of the locker; to enjoy yourself to the utmost in that region of bliss, where there is no hurry and all things are dry; to let your soul simmer in that delicious atmosphere of tuneful song, stirring story, and reflective blue smoke;

to harken to the wailing of the winds without and to know, in delightful, reposeful security no less, that this time they are wailing for somebody else.

These deep-sea fishermen, in their heartiness of hospitality, are the chosen of the Lord. With them, the best in the locker is ever ready for the caller, be he castaway stranger, chance acquaintance, or cherished friend. Of the ways of their mates all fishermen are, of course, aware. And so, when two, who had been mildly celebrating ashore, dropped into their dory at the end of a long, planked dock, and set out in the direction of the harbor lights in Provincetown this night, it is likely that they were anticipating an agreeable finish to their evening. It was only midnight and there were yet some cheering hours to sun-up, when, by skippers' orders, the seining fleet would be standing out to sea again.

One of these two was a big man, "able-looking," a fisherman would have said; the build of the other signified less. The big man was easily in command. He sat on the after thwart, set the stroke, directed all movements, and attended to the hailing. It was well he owned a voice of rare power; one of only moderate force would have succumbed early to the opposition of the shrieking gale and the reluctance of comfortable people below to come up and answer bothersome questions.

They were looking, it would seem, for that reliable craft, the *William Walker,* which all men should know by her new-painted green sides, with gold stripe along the run, white mast-heads, and blue seine-boat towing. But a description dealing merely in color is but a poor guide at night, as many, many disturbed crews explained.

When the two left the long dock, the position of the *William Walker* had been plainly defined. "No'west by nothe—about; and four cable lengths off shore." Could anything be clearer? So, when the two set out, their confidence had been a perfect thing. The big man, indeed, taking account of the blackness, had said: "We don't even need to get near enough to see her, Joey. Just a smell of her and we'll know her—" which was possibly true, but unfortunately, as was explained later, the wind was off shore that night.

So round and round they rowed. The big man threw his voice into the recesses of comfortable bunks, and from these, wrathful men, who desired not to be disturbed, had to climb out and ascend to rain-swept decks, to answer curious questions as to the location of a lively schooner, the *William Walker* by name, with green-painted sides and gold stripe along the run, with white mast-heads, and blue seine-boat towing. The searchers were treated to some plain language after the first round of their uncertain route, notably from over the rails of that bunch of fine, able fishermen, the *Eliza Parkhurst,* the *Norumbega,* the *Grayling,* the *Harry Belden,* the *Richard Wainright,* all of Gloucester, and particularly when they disturbed the slumbers of those redoubtable old hookers, the *Herald of the Morning* and the *Good Will to Men,* also of Gloucester, from where, it is said, they hailed as privateersmen in their palmy days.

The two men in the dory had made the fleet pretty well acquainted with the distinguishing marks of their vessel, with the green-painted sides and the gold stripe along the run, with the white mast-heads and the blue seine-boat towing, but to no effect; and many times had they robustly hailed, "Aho-oy the *Wil-l-liam Walker,*" but no *William Walker* rose up to greet them from out of the darkness of the night.

It was while they were waiting for the anathematic responses from the deck of the *Good Will to Men* (it was the third series from her deck), waiting for the voice of wrath to die down the wind, that the big man came to a final decision.

Resting dejectedly on his oars, the big man said: "Seventy-odd seiners here and every blessed one of 'em with a riding-light up, and which is ours, Joey? It's as bad as the candles and the lookin'-glasses goin' 'round, ain't it? Look at 'em."

"Yes, 'tis kind of puzzlin'. What'll we do now?"

"Do? We'll go aboard the next vessel we find awake. We made a good try and even the skipper couldn't kick now. Pick out any one where there's a light below and we'll go aboard."

"Well, here's a fellow to wind'ard. I can't see onto her deck, but they must have a light below, for they're noisy enough for a christening. Listen to 'em."

"Yes. What's that they're singin'? Ketch it?"

"Wait—they'll start again. There—hear it?"

Being to the leeward of the vessel indicated, the words came clearly enough to the men in the dory when they stopped rowing for a stroke or two.

She's the schooner *Lucy Foster,*
She's a seiner out of Gloucester,
She's an able, handsome lady,
She can go.

The song seemed to inspire the big man. He at once set a stroke that made his dory mate pant. He explained by saying, "Joey, boy, but I must get into that. I don't know who they are, but I used to be seine-heaver on the *Lucy*. Hit her up." He put his broad back into the rowing and hummed the words while the chorus went on:

The way she'll walk to wind'ard,
You would think that nothing hindered,
She's an able, handsome lady,
See her go.

That brought them to the side of the vessel. The big man was over the rail with a vault and a "Look to the painter, you, Joey." Onward went the fo'c's'le choir:

For——

She can sail to set you crazy,
Not a timber in her's lazy,
She's the handsome *Lucy Foster*
And she's go-o-ing home.

The big man was down the gangway in time to swell the great tide that surged up to all throats for that last line.

"And she's go-o-ing home," he roared. "That was the girl, the *Lucy*. Hulloh, Johnnie Hardy! When'd you get in? Hulloh, Dannie—hulloh, Mike—hulloh, Ezra—hulloh, everybody. Drive her again, boys. Drive her now." He swirled his great arm through the thick smoke by way of marking time, and the whole fo'c's'le, waving pipes or mugs to add emphasis, followed him with extreme unction. Men sitting on lockers, men lounging in bunks, men standing by the galley stove, made a stop in their eating, drinking, or smoking, to add vigor to the chant:

When she swings the main boom over
And she feels the wind abaft,
The way she'll walk to Gloucester'll
Make a steamer look a raft.

"Hurroo, fellows! Drive her! Here's the best part of it. Now!——

Oh, the *Lucy's* left the ground,
And there's nothing standing 'round
Can hold the *Lucy Foster*
When the *Lucy's* homeward bound.

"She was the girl, I tell you; warn't she, Johnnie Hardy? All hands, now, heave away and haul the *Lucy* home. Now then—whoop!——

For she's the *Lucy Foster*,
She's a seiner out of Gloucester,
She's an able, handsome lady,
And she's go-o-ing home.

"That's what, boys. Let Joey and me mug up and get over near the fire to dry out, and we'll have it again."

"And when did you get in, Steve Perkins?" shouted an uproarious half-dozen at once.

"Just afore dark. But we went ashore, Joey White and me, and we've been pulling all over the bay tryin' to find the *William Walker* again. Seen anything of——"

"Hi-i-i, hi-i-i-ii!" roared Hardy. "Seen anything of the *William Walker* 'round here? Green-painted sides, with a gold stripe along the run, white mast-heads, and a little blue seine-boat towin'? Ho, ho," roared Hardy.

"Blessed Lord! How'd you know?"

"How? Have we no ears, man? And that was you, Steve? If we'd known, we'd have hove you a line. But we only says, 'Who in hell's that crazy man?' and didn't mind."

"That so? Well, what vessel's this?"

"*Henry Clay Parker.*"

"No? The old *Henry Clay?*"

"Yes, sir, the old *Henry C.* Been fixed up down here a bit. New woodwork here and there, and a few planks for'ard since that last jam-up she had. Changed her looks some inside here, but she's the same old *Henry* you used to know, Steve."

"Good old *Henry.* The only vessel that ever beat the *Lucy.* Remember that, Johnnie?"

"M-m—. That was a race, that one. I was telling the boys here awhile ago—the date brought it up—and I got started telling what the *Lucy* could do. Five year ago to-night it was, Steve, and a night like to-night, outside. Blow? M-m——."

"It did blow, didn't it? There's lots of us glad to be here to-night with our gear safe; but that night we came through with everything that'd hang onto the hoops, didn't we, Johnnie?"

"Yes, sir. And it's queer now, Steve, you was in the *Parker* that time and I was in the *Lucy.*"

"Yes; you with Tom O'Donnell and me with Billie Simms. There was a desp'rate pair of fishermen for carryin' sail, and if an able seaman ever sailed out of Gloucester (and there's been one or two out of there, I guess), there was a pair of 'em. And Tom O'Donnell could sail a vessel, couldn't he?"

"Could he? Man!"

"I mind the time well, Stevie. Tom sings out: 'Hello, Billie, you'll be headin' to the west'ard soon by the look o' things?'

"'Pretty soon, perhaps,' says Billie.

"'That's what I was thinkin',' says Tom, 'with this nice little breeze working easterly. I had it in my mind to run to market myself. And I says to myself, now I've got a couple of hundred barrels nice fat mackerel below, and, by the looks o' things, Billie Simms he's got a couple of hundred, too. Why, we ought to be fine company goin' home, thinks I, and while we're about it, we might try tacks on the way home, or have a fine run of it, if the wind stays easterly.'

"'You mean you want to race the *Lucy* again the *Henry?*' says Billie.

"'Och, no. 'Tisn't me would be wantin' to make such a boast as to sail the little *Lucy* agin a big, able vessel like the *Par-r-ker,* Billie.'

"And mind you, Stevie, they were the one tonnage—the *Lucy* a bit deeper, but the *Henry* a mite wider.

"'When it comes to heavy weather,' goes on the blarneyin' O'Donnell, 'the whole fleet knows the *Par-r-ker,* but just for the pure love of it, or for a bit of money, if you like it better, we might satisfy ourselves on a disputed p'int or two of sailin'.'

"'You mean to race from here to Boston—to T wharf?' asked Billie.

"'Well, now, it might look like a race, but seein' that it's fair wind comin' and we're both goin' to market anyway,' and the pair of 'em went on—you know how they went on, Stevie."

"Yes. They both wanted to race bad enough, but O'Donnell wanted to have it to say afterward that he didn't come lookin' for a race, and Billie wanted to make it look as though O'Donnell caught him kind of unready like and forced him into it—there'd be more credit in winning, if they could make people believe something like that.

"And both of them primed for it, with ballast just right for a blow, and fish and salt stowed as careful below as if it was for th' America's cup. Well, to shorten up the story, boys, they bet their share of the trip, what would be coming to them from their share as one of the crew and their skipper's percentage. That was it, warn't it, Johnnie?"

"That's right. And O'Donnell thought it was just as good as his before they started at all. When we put after the *Parker,* he says: 'B'ys, there'll be somethin' for all hands out o' this. Nobody turns in to-night. Crack everything onto her now, when she comes about—tops'ls, stays'l, big jib and balloon—and we'll put after the *Par-r-ker.* There's a man knows the Georges, Billie Simms. He'll do for our pilot and we'll keep him in sight.' O'Donnell was only two years out of Galway then, and he wasn't acquainted with the Banks like your skipper, Steve."

"As far as that went, Johnnie, there warn't many of 'em knew the Georges like old Billie. And you'd better believe that when Billie 'greed to race he knew just what he was about. He had no sentimental notions about the *Henry Clay.* He knew well's anybody that the *Parker* couldn't hold the *Lucy Foster* in fair, straight sailin'. He said as much when he pointed her up and takes a look at the *Lucy* over into the wind astern.

"'Boys,' says Billie, 'it's goin' to be a gale in a hurry, the way things is lookin' now. And there ain't no vessel of her tonnage afloat'll beat the *Lucy Foster* into port with Tom O'Donnell aboard in heavy weather. They talk about her bein' a summer-weather boat and all that sort of foolishness, but I know better. She'll stand up if she's druv to it and there's the man'll drive her to it. But for all that we'll come pretty near beatin' the *Lucy* t'night. Put her kites on and let her roll into it. We'll hang onto 'em's long's we can.'

"So we put on every stitch and she began to roll into it for fair. We could just make out the *Lucy* then. That was about seven o'clock and we'd got our lights up."

"I remember it, Steve. We was trailin' your green light's close as we could. O'Donnell said he was goin' to stay on your quarter till we were off the Banks. Once clear o' the shoals he said he was goin' to say good-by."

"Yes. Billie figured O'Donnell'd play it about that way. You know what real shoal spots there is all along to the westward of where we were then. Billie knew them so well that he had a chart of his own. He had things down on that chart that weren't down on any gover'ment chart. Soon's we got fair way he got out that private chart of his and began to study it on the cabin floor. He had the lead kept goin', too. Billie was a 'genious cuss with charts. He had red, blue, and green colored ink on this one for diff'rent shoals. One bad shoal was all in red; sixteen feet of water's all there was there. Billie kept his finger on that spot a long time and studied all 'round it. Every once in a while he'd sing out, 'See what's under us now,' and Archie Nickerson'd heave the lead and sing out what it was there. And Billie'd say, 'Keep her as she is for a while,' and we'd keep her to it. We was certainly goin' along then.

"Bime-by, Billie comes up from his chart and takes a look at the bottom of the lead and begins to study. Pretty soon he sings out all at once: 'Stand ready to blow out the side-lights when I give the word—a man to each and both together. Steve,'—he turns to me—'you and me'll hold the wheel the rest of this night. We'll let her go off now four points good. Yes, more yet—there—'bout no'west. Let her run that way. Now let that lead go again there. We'll shake up Tom O'Donnell afore a great while.'

"Then the lead goes and we gets twenty fathom. Pretty soon comes fifteen fathom. Then it comes fourteen, thirteen—twelve—eleven—ten-n-n. When it got to ten fathom it held awhile. We was thinkin' you fellows on the *Lucy,* Johnnie, was feelin' kind o' queer 'bout then—ten fathom and shoalin'. Of course you kept the lead goin' on the *Lucy,* Johnnie?

"You better believe we kept it goin' and watched it comin'. When it got down to ten fathom Tom began to get interested. 'Ten fathom, is it?' he says. 'Faith, it's deep enough in itself, but that's gin'rally as shoal as I sail my own vessel at night in a blow on Georges. But Billie knows where he's goin' or if he don't, then he ought to.' Then we got nine fathom. He didn't say anything. When it came eight, he didn't open his head, either; but he begins to watch the compass and from that to lookin' ahead after the *Parker's* green light—we could see your starboard light all the time, we being to wind'ard. When it comes seven fathom, he begins to get warmed up. 'Blessed Mother,' he says, 'but Billie Simms will be taking us off Georges by a short cut. Keep the lead hove and—up for'ard there—don't lose sight of the *Par-r-ker's* light.'"

"And how'd he take it when it got still shoaler?"

"When we sings out 'Si-i-ix,' he only says 'Skatin' pur-rty close, that, b'ys.' And then we says 'Fi-i-ive,' and we roars it out, because we were beginning to get worried, knowing the desp'rate kind of a man he was. But he only walks backward and for'ard, between the house and the rail to wind'ard and says, 'Well, b'ys, it's but six inches in draught between us, and what's six inches?—where there's a channel for the *Par-r-ker* we'll find one for the *Lucy.* Hold as near in her wake as you can'—to Archie Drum at the wheel. 'Don't let her light get away from you, Archie b'y, or we'll be bakin' in pur-r-gatory before mor-r-nin'.'

"Then we sung out—'Fo-our and a ha-a-alf-f!' and then—'Fo-o-our-r! Thre-e-e and a ha-a-alf-f, THRE-E-E AND A HA-A-ALF-F'—we hollered it twice, just to wake him up to it. In twenty-one feet of water and it shoalin' and we drawin' fifteen! and goin' into it at about fourteen knots an hour. Tom runs for-'ard at that, jumps into the fore riggin' and looks ahead. We gets three fathom. We roared it out so you could hear us a mile, I guess, and then——"

"The *Parker's* lights went out, Johnnie."

"Yes, just then I guess it was, Stevie; for the lookout hollered out somethin' and Tom comes jumpin' back aft.

"'Hard up, hard up!' he yells to Archie. 'Swing her off, swing her off, the *Parker's* gone under—Billie drove her to it, by hell! Swing her off, or we'll find bottom too! Stand by to ease fore and main sheets! Jump to it, b'ys, jump to it!' Well, sir, I don't know whatever saved that vessel from capsizing with the sail she had on. We worked like streaks, but she had to come 'round in a hurry, the way Tom O'Donnell and Archie at the wheel drove them spokes up was a caution.

"She laid over to it till the sea was in the companion-way. She laid over so fast that we thought it was all up—rolled over on her side, and so fast that Archie Drum let go the wheel; let go and would have left it altogether, only Tom grits out: 'Hang on, man, hang on. Blessed Mother! don't you know better than to let her come up with all that water on her deck? Hold her to it till she gets a chance to roll it over the way it came!' Yes, sir, that was Tom O'Donnell. He let her have it for fair—buried her under it. We grabbed hold of ring-bolts and sheets to keep from sliding overboard to looard. But she came up. 'I knew she'd come,' says he, 'for 'twas meself that saw to her ballast and she had to come, b'ys—if the ballast didn't shift.' She was sure enough a vessel and we didn't blame the skipper then for the way he was stuck on her. But what did you fellows do on the *Parker* then, Steve?"

"Well, when we saw the *Lucy's* port light work out of sight and then the green light go swingin' across our stern and then the port light again go tearin' away from us, we knew how it had been on the *Lucy*. How Billie cackled! 'There,' he says, 'he's the Wild Irishman, sure enough; but I'll bet something nice that them three-fathom soundings and our lights goin' out with it made him hop. Ho, ho! and another cable length and he'd been clear over it and in water as safe as the middle of the Atlantic.' Then Billie ordered in the light sails. 'We've been takin' too many chances with them, tryin' to set a pace for the *Lucy.*' And then he headed her west no'west—straight for Cape Cod. 'And hold that course till we're by Highland Light,' he says, 'and then we'll put her on her way for Minot's. Ha, ha!' laughs Billie. We could hear him above the wind—'Think of O'Donnell beatin' to the no'th'ard and we gettin' it two points abaft the beam under all we can carry! Ha, ha!' My, but Billie laughed."

"Yes, and the *Lucy'd* been beatin' to the no'th'ard yet, I guess, Steve, if Tom O'Donnell hadn't got to thinkin' over the way the *Parker* went out of sight. It was gettin' on toward midnight. We'd shortened sail after we thought the *Parker* went down, and we was feelin' pretty blue, thinkin' of all you fellows gone. We were all up on deck, when all of a sudden O'Donnell began to swear. He was swearin' so fast that we couldn't keep up with him—half of it in Irish.

"'Let her wear 'round,' he yells, to Dannie Hickey at the wheel. 'Let her come 'round till the wind's over the quarther. Put her west half no'the—that will be bringin' us to Highland Light. I don't believe that damn Billie Simms is gone down at all. Cr-a-ack on all she's got now, b'ys. We'll get them yet, we'll get the divils yet. Would you think a Christian would play such a thrick? But we'll get them, we'll have them be mor-r-nin'. We'll show them yet what the little gur-rl can do.'"

"You must have come then, Johnnie?"

"Come? Man, she was an ocean liner hooked up. You must know, when the *Parker* came a hundred and twenty miles or so in nine hours, how we came. Come? She fair leaped with every for'ard jump. On my soul, I thought she'd pull the spars out of herself. She was boiling along, fair boiling, man. She'd stand up on her rudder and throw her breast at the clouds, then she'd bury her knight-heads under. But she didn't carry all her sail long. That fancy six-hundred-yard balloon, the sentimental summer-gauze balloon, as the fleet called it, didn't stay on a great while. W-ur-r-up! and 'twas up in the sky. But she went along. 'Can you sail, you little divil, can you sail?' O'Donnell kept sayin'. 'We'll show them, we'll show them. Go it, my *Lucy,* go it.' Man, but we came along. She fair screeched, did the *Lucy,* that night. Just think of it, Steve—she, with that howling no'theeaster over the quarter and the *Parker* somewhere ahead! Could they fix things better for her to sail? Yes, sir, she screeched and that wild man stampin' up and down between the house and the wind'ard rail. And never a let up all that night. I'll bet old Billie was some surprised when he saw us in the mornin'."

"Warn't he! Warn't all of us on the *Parker?* 'Twas barely sun-up and we were inside Minot's Light, fair in the harbor, you might say, and Billie'd just said: 'Well, boys, I guess we can let up on her now. The wind's jumpin' to the no'west and risin' too. I wonder where Tom O'Donnell is now, with his circular no'therly courses.' He hadn't half said that when somebody hollered: 'Hi, skipper, who's that astern?'

"We all looked and if there warn't the *Lucy!* She warn't too plain—it was a dark kind of a mornin'—but anybody could tell the *Lucy* as far as they could see her.

"Billie looks. 'What the devil—the *Lucy!*' he says. 'And drivin'? My soul, look at her comin'! Make sail!' he hollers. 'Up with tops'ls and balloon. Up with them!' he hollers. 'Somebody shift tacks for that fore tops'l there. We'll jibe over and shoot through The Narrows. Bend on that stays'l, boys! Fly—fly—boys! the devil himself is after us now.' We made sail. It was howlin' from the no'west now, mind you, and we tackin' up The Narrows.

"Whis-s-st! went the big balloon from the bolt ropes. Whis-s-st! went the fore tops'l—nothing left of that but a few rags and the bolt rope bangin' round on the hoops. And we wasn't a bit sorry when the tops'l went—shiftin' tacks in a bloody no'wester, ain't no joke up aloft, not the way the *Parker* was diving."

"We saw them go, Steve. And how Tom hopped around and laughed. 'We'll get them yet! We can carry them!' he was yellin' and then the gale took an extra good grip on the *Lucy's* fore tops'l that she'd carried all night long and pulled it out by the roots. Our two topmast heads was springin' together all this time like they was two whips, and Tom fit to be nailed up in a mackerel barrel, he was so mad.

"Well, Billie knew his business that time, Johnnie. It was tack, tack, tack, all the way through The Narrows. Eight times we tacked before we were clear of it. You see, Billie figured he could take more chances than O'Donnell could, he knew the harbor so well. 'Twas like the short cuts on Georges. But the devil was in O'Donnell. Where we went he followed. We took some chances on the *Parker,* but imagine the *Lucy* pilin' on behind us and the skipper barely knowin' the regular channel—a Galway fisherman two years out."

"The fairies were with us, as Tom O'Donnell himself would say. We slid through The Narrows and humped it for the dock. We looked to see how you fellows made out, Johnnie.

"'My soul, but he's a game one,' says Billie, watchin' the *Lucy*. 'But it don't matter—the devil and a steamer couldn't get us now, if nothin' parts.'

"Billie began to take more short cuts. We went over places I'll swear charts said we couldn't. But we had to—there was O'Donnell comin' hand over fist. Wherever the *Parker* went, there was the *Lucy* along pretty soon. It was a race and it warn't ended till both vessels were at the wharf.

"When we made to shoot into the slip, there was the *Lucy* roundin' to under our stern. O'Donnell was standin' aft by the wheel himself. When he comes abreast of us in the dock—our stern-line was barely made fast when his was hove upon the wharf—he shakes his fist at Billie.

"'You win in all truth, Billie Simms, but which vessel, think ye, is the best after all?'

"'Oh,' says Billie, laughin', 'this ain't been no race. We just happened to be ready to run to market, as you remarked last night, and here we are. This old pung'll do to carry home fish in a pinch, but if I had a good vessel, a real good vessel, like some I know in the fleet——'

"'A good vessel? Go and get one, Billie Simms. Build one of the *Lucy's* tonnage and I'll race you vessel agin vessel and the winner take them both. I'll show you the way, Billie Simms, from here to Georges and back again, or from here to hell—and back again, if we can get back.'

"'Oh, now, Tom. I ain't sayin' the *Lucy* ain't a pretty good vessel. In summer breezes now, I ain't the least doubt she'd keep up with most any of the seinin' fleet—most any of 'em.'"

The big seine-heaver halted here in his narrative while he poured himself out a mug of coffee from the boiler on the stove and helped himself to a wedge of pie from the grub locker. But some of the crew rose up from lockers and bunks and queried impatiently, "And what did O'Donnell say to that?"

"H-m-m—. What did he say? Ask Johnnie there—he was nearer than me to him. What did he say, Johnnie?"

"Let it go, what he said. Some of you young men wouldn't be improved by hearin' what he said to Billie. I'd have to have provocation, same's he had. But the two of them got over it. After they'd sold their fish, they got together in the *Parker's* cabin and Billie admits that so far as he knew the *Lucy* was the fastest vessel of her tonnage, take her on all-'round sailin', goin' out of Boston or Gloucester. Of course, that pleased O'Donnell and he said that Billie always was an able seaman, and then—this was after they'd sold their fish and settled up—Billie let him make a copy of that private chart of the Georges. And while he was makin' it, Billie says: 'I never before let anybody make a copy of that chart—nobody but you. It'll be worth a lot to you, that chart,' says Billie.

"At that O'Donnell looks up at Billie. 'My share and percentage—will it be worth that ever to me ever, do you think?'

"'H-m-m,' says Billie, 'I dunno; but it's been worth that to me,' and then he laughs, and they both laughs. And afterward they went up on Atlantic Avenue and had a few drinks together. And I guess nobody ever worked any short cuts or beat O'Donnell off the Georges since."

"No," said the big man, replacing his empty mug in the locker. "No, I'll bet they didn't. Boys, I could talk till this fo'c'sle was black about the *Lucy* and O'Donnell. I was seine-heaver on her for two seasons. But me and Joey'll have to be goin' along and hunt up the *William Walker*. In this light I guess we'll be able to make out her green sides and blue seine-boat. Good-by, Johnnie; good-by, everybody."

From the rigging of the *Parker* they picked out their vessel easily enough in the growing morning light. On the way they passed the famous *Lucy*, clear white at this time, with a gold stripe along her run. Steve stopped rowing to admire her.

"She cert'nly do look beau-ti-ful, the *Lucy*. She's a man for strength and a woman for good looks. A lady's yacht lyin' there, but a fisherman when there's somethin' doin'—able for the highest wind and the biggest sea that ever came out of the North Atlantic. Give me the *Lucy* in a gale, before all the three-stack liners that ever steamed out of New York. She'll shake you up—she'll jump—my soul but she'll jump! She's a little thing to many people's notions, a little schooner, no more, but, man, she'll bring you home, and that's the main thing with men that fish on the Banks. Watch her, Joey. Watch her an hour from now, when the sun's lookin' up over the Cape Cod shore and see the way she'll trip in and out among the fleet. When you see her round The Race and lay her spike bowsprit s'utheast by east—about—then you'll surely know the seining fleet is standin' out to sea. For

'At three o'clock the cook he stirred
To bake the fine hot bread,
At four the skipper passed the word
That jumped us out of bed;
In half an hour we'd made all sail
And broke the mud-hooks free,
At five o'clock the seining fleet
Was standing out to sea.'"

And once again the big man roared it out:

And at fi-ive o'clock the sei-eining fleet
Was standing out to sea.

And with that he and Joey boarded the long-sought *William Walker.*

# II

## REYKJAVIK TO GLOUCESTER

'Twas sou' sou' west
Then west sou' west
From Rik-ie-vik to Gloucester:
'Twas strainin' sails
An' buried rails
Aboard the *Lucy Foster*.

Her planks did creak
From post to peak
Her topm'sts bent like willow!
"I'll bust her spars"
Says Wesley Marrs
"But I'll beat the *Boundin' Billow*."

Elevated above the head of a deep wharf-slip, low flanked by a ship-chandler's shop to one side and a sail-maker's loft to another, commanding a fine view of the docks and harbor beneath, and of the bay beyond, perched up where nothing coming or going past Eastern Point will fail to be noticed—this is the lookout tower of the Great Eastern Fish Company of the port of Gloucester. In the official bulletins of the company this place is known as the "Observatory," but in the every-day speech of the fishermen of Gloucester it is better and more fittingly described as the "Crow's Nest."

To attain this eyrie it is needful to go round and round long flights of steps, that creak to your weight and sway to the wind as you climb. After you get there, you find a room of three flat walls and a rounded front, of which the rear, or west side, is blocked off by the staircase whereby you came. Coast charts, bank soundings, world maps, and magazine illustrations of a nautical and sporting nature are tacked to the wall on your left. On the wall at your right—the southerly—are several pairs of marine glasses, a long telescope, and an aneroid barometer hung from nails driven here and there, wherever space is to be found among the relief models of what all men know to be fast-sailing fishermen. A fresh varnished but much dented spar, an old topmast, serves for a flagstaff; the same stepped to the floor and made to butt through the centre of the ceiling.

The east side is all of glass. This is the side that opens on to a little quarter-deck balcony, and looks out to sea. This balcony may be entirely closed in by an arrangement of shutters that work over and down like companion hatches, although you find out later that you have to climb to the upper deck by way of an outside rope ladder to make them work. In the centre of one of the hatches, when you come to look, is a brass-bound port-hole, plainly intended for stormy weather. A realistic bit of railing, the taffrail of a fisherman wrecked off Thatcher's, is there to guard the unwary—once over the low rail and you are down to the waters of the dock. There is a row of scuppers along the balcony's deck, and under the rail are a couple of cleats, to which are made fast the halyards that run to the flag at the masthead.

Only one chair is in this place, after the fashion of up-to-date fishermen, which always carry a hinged chair in the cabin for the skipper's use. This chair is for the lookout on duty. All others must sit on the lockers against the walls, or squat on the stair-landing at the rear, or content themselves with leaning over the stern of the quarter-deck. All this goes to make up the famous "Crow's Nest," of the fishing port of Gloucester.

It is the business of the lookout on duty to take his station in front of the window and watch for incoming vessels. If it is a fine day, like this one, he will hoist the window-sashes back to the pulleys, push forward his chair, and rest his feet on the rail. When he sights an inbound fisherman, he will identify her at the earliest possible moment, and make immediate report of same to the office.

Two men are paid for this work, each standing watch in his turn. Being keen of eye and acquainted with the minutest peculiarities of every schooner in the fleet, these men can name vessels at incredible distances. In some cases, where neither knowledge nor eyesight could possibly avail, they make marvellous guesses—for which they do not attempt to account. It may be a sixth sense that enables them to pick out and identify a vessel while she is yet but a blur in the haze to most of us.

Their business, as has been said, is to make early report of incoming vessels. They do that very well, and it is for that they are paid; but their pleasure and their most arduous occupation lies in the absorbing art of conversation. In the skilful development of this faculty they are aided by a volunteer staff of regular callers, who much prefer to put in time at this congenial observatory than to attend to any fatiguing business that might arise to meet them were they to stroll incautiously along the wharves.

What subject might suggest itself to the council of Crow's Nest at any particular lull, no prophet could say with certainty; but on a day like this, a beautiful summer morning, with a gentle easterly sighing in over the rail, and the docks and the harbor below alive with the loading and outfitting of many seiners, it could not very well get far away from the doings of the mackerel fleet.

Fourteen of the seining fleet were in, and this favorable easterly would be sure to bring in more. It had been an extraordinary season for the seiners. Mackerel aplenty were to be had, and they were bringing great prices. Stocks of three and four thousand dollars were getting common for vessels, and men no longer boasted of sharing anything under a hundred dollars for a short trip. It promised to be an unprecedented season altogether, and the watchers in the tower, when next they resumed the conversation, were disposed to rejoice.

"It's a good thing for Gloucester, it's a fine thing for the men," observed the lookout in the chair. "Won't be so many have to go to Georges or the big banks this winter to find grub and rent for the wife and children. Here's a lad coming in now —wait, till I make sure with the glass—yes, the *Lucy Foster*. Bill, report the *Lucy Foster*, Captain Marrs, to the office, will you? Ten days she's been gone. This lad'll be glad enough for a good mackerel season, for he does hate haddockin' in winter. He went last winter, and he says he's had enough of that kind of fishin'."

"Shouldn't think he'd have to—the money he's made, Petie."

"No, he oughtn't to, but Wesley's been a spender. But this spring, before he went on the southern mackerel cruise, he gave it out that he was going to save. I don't know myself what's drivin' him—though I wouldn't be surprised if he was stowin' away something against getting married this fall. He's certainly piling up a stock and hustlin' as if he intended to have a little salvage to draw on when he made up his mind to stop ashore a winter and start housekeeping. And if he does get married, I s'pose that ends the *Lucy* for carryin' the broom. I don't expect we'll hear of any more piling on sail to see how much she really can stand up under, or layin' her over to see how far she'll go without capsizing."

"Why?" put in one of those slow-witted ones, who must always have things explained in detail.

"Why? why?" snorted the man in the chair. "Did y'ever see any of the drivers keep it up long after gettin' married? Don't it tame the wildest of 'em when they get to thinkin' that p'raps the wife and children's waitin' for them at the end of the trip?"

"Well, I dunno. I don't see as Archie Nichols slacked any since he got married."

"Archie Nichols? Good Lord! does he count? Married a no-use woman that's druv him to drink and worse things than he ever took up with before. Leave Archie out. And look at the others. There's Tommy Bolton now. What do his crew tell you about him now? Do you hear of him pullin' the spars out of his vessel since he settled down to a home of his own? Can't you see him any afternoon now between trips walking down Main Street abreast of his little woman and the latest fat baby on his arm? Ever hear of Billie Simms in this year o' grace havin' to go on the railway 'bout every other trip or so to have the *Henry Clay Parker* overhauled for strained seams for'ard? I guess not. Nor Wesley Marrs, nowadays; and he's only engaged, at the worst—tryin' to see what he can do with the *Lucy* without getting her hove down. I guess not."

"I say, Peter," inserted a subtle one, who measured exactly the temper of the sage in the chair, and was eager to forward the psychological moment, "was Wesley Marrs such a devil for driving, after all?"

"Devil? He was all the devils, when it came to carryin' sail. Now I was with him three years. My last trip, when I fell from the masthead in among the gurry kids and broke my knee-cap, I was with Wesley Marrs in the *Lucy Foster*. I'm telling you this man'd spread a whole mains'l to a gale as quick as your wife or mine'd hang out a bed-sheet to the sun. When a sail went into the air—busted—Wesley used to follow it with his eyes and then say, surprised-like: 'Don't it beat hell—the rotten canvas they puts on vessels these days?'"

"You must have been with him, Peter, when that record run was made from Iceland—when the *Lucy* and the English yacht had their big race."

"Was I? Twenty-eight hundred miles, they call it, from Rikievik to Gloucester, and the *Lucy* came down in nine days and ten hours. That's going, people, for any vessel; but this one that time had her hold full of fletched halibut."

"What was it brought him along so fast?"

"Well—I guess wind had as much to do with it as anything. Just plain wind, out of the bosom of the North Atlantic, and p'raps a little, just a little, of Wesley Marrs' drivin' her."

"Who beat?" interjected a voice that should never have been allowed to disturb the silence of this generally well-posted company.

The man in the chair looked around with much curiosity to discover the inquirer. It was a young fellow, plainly not long in Gloucester, one of those lads who so frequently come there to try fishing—and quite often make good fishermen—but who are sometimes a great trial to their friends while acquiring the rudiments.

"Who beat?" echoed Peter in scorn. "And *when'd* you get in and *where'd* you get your fish?"

"I say, Peter," put in the subtle questioner on whom devolved the duty of holding the story to its course, "were you there when the match was made?"

"Was I? Warn't the skipper and me and Joe Lane gettin' down to a little table over a glass—you don't stand up to a bar in Rikievik generally—and the skipper was pretty well pleased. You see he'd only bought out Tom O'Donnell's half of the *Lucy* late that spring and this was his first trip. And the last thing O'Donnell said when he signed the papers and took the money was: 'Now, Wesley, b'y, you're gettin' a great vessel. You're gettin' a vessel that nothing of her tonnage anywhere can sail away from. While I owned her she was the jewel of the fleet. Don't let anything cross her bow, Wesley, b'y.' O'Donnell, a great rover of a man, went to the Pacific Coast that time to look up seals Behring Sea way.

"Well, Wesley was telling us about that very talk with O'Donnell and saying how the *Lucy* could sail and everything like that. You know how he'd be likely to carry on talkin' 'bout his vessel. This swell-dressed Englishman was takin' it all in. We didn't know who he was, though we suspicioned he was English every time we looked at him. At last he mixes in. He says:

"'Excuse me, but I gather you are fishermen up here for halibut?'

"'You're right,' says Wesley.

"'From the States?'

"'From America? Yes—from Gloucester,' says Wesley.

"'Ah, from Gloucester. Fine, able fishermen from there, I hear,'—he kind of drawed his words out—'hardy, courageous, fine, able seamen——'

"'And fine able vessels,' says Wesley, warmin' up right away. We guessed easy enough what was in Wesley's mind. Somebody or other'd been writing stories 'bout Gloucester fishermen 'bout that time and putting them in the old style pinkies and square-ended tubs that was the fashion when some of your fathers and mine went to sea. I never yet went among strangers in any of the new vessels that they didn't seem to be surprised at the build of our vessels, and, of course, the *Lucy Foster* and a few others of that model struck 'em dumb. Anyway, to get along with the story, the Englishman was surprised to hear that the *Lucy* was a fisherman—he'd an eye for fine vessels, y'see—and had noticed her in the harbor. But he didn't know much about our kind of people and Wesley kind of explained some things to him.

"Then the Englishman told his story. He owned the big schooner yacht, the all-white fellow with the varnished top-rails and yellow stripe along the run. We'd had an eye on her, by the way, and a handsome craft she was. That was his cruiser. He'd come in the day before from some queer place on the coast of Norway and he didn't see anything in Rikievik to hold him. He was bound for America next by way of Boston, Newport, New York, Baltimore, and so on down, so's to be among the West Indies for the winter.

"Well, he was a pretty hot sport, this one, and you all know the kind of a boy Wesley used to be when anybody spoke against his *Lucy*. They had an argument, back to the days of the old America and all that. Finally, they 'greed to race to Gloucester. The Englishman said he'd just as leave run into Gloucester so long as it was so handy to Boston.

"This Englishman was all right. He says about the money: 'Your word is sufficient for me, Captain. Men that look like you will pay up. If you lose, you pay over a thousand dollars. If I lose, I pay over to you a thousand, to settle as soon as both boats get into Gloucester. And in the matter of time allowance —the *Bounding Billow,* you must have noticed, is half as big again as you are. She isn't loaded down like you, and I can afford to give it. She has never been beaten at ocean racing, by the way, and I am willing to give you time allowance for our larger measurement.'

"'To hell with time allowance,' says Wesley. 'There's never any time allowance when two fishermen race. They all race on their own bottom. We try to swing off somewhere near together. And first vessel home wins. You're a little longer and more beam and draught—let it go. And's for being loaded down—the *Lucy* could stow away half as many more halibut, and I wish she had 'em the price halibut's been fetchin' this summer. Don't worry about the *Lucy*. Those couple of hundred thousand of fletched halibut down below'll just give her a grip on things—sort o' stiffen her up and keep her from layin' over too much when it comes to blow—and it's coming to blow or I don't know. There'll be wind stirrin' before you or me see Eastern Point, and the vessel that'll carry the sail'll be the lad for the trip. I tell you, man, with all of these September gales coming our way, you won't think you're yachting off Cowes. I hope your gear's been overhauled lately,' says Wesley, and with that they left to get things ready.

"There was a gentle gale stirrin' from the no'th'ard when we sailed out of Rikievik next day, Friday. Wesley liked the look o' things pretty well. We put out behind the Englishman, him under two-reefed mains'l and the *Lucy* under a single reef—two jibs and whole fores'l, both of us. That was along 'bout dark. Wesley didn't make any attempt to push by the yacht—just laid to wind'ard of her. He did love to get to wind'ard of a vessel—lay off her quarter and watch her. And for most of the rest of that night, we stayed there so.

"When the sun ought to have been pretty near to showin' up again, Wesley says: 'Boys, I can't see but what the *Lucy's* holdin' her own, and I guess we'll wear off to the south'ard just a little. We might's well get out of sight of this fellow quick's we can now. I've a notion, too, this breeze'll be shiftin' no'the'ly before a great while, and there's nothing the *Lucy* likes quite so well as to take it over her quarter when it blows.'

"I don't know whether the *Bounding Billow* people saw us get away or not—p'r'aps they didn't care. Anyway, they didn't come after us. We sunk their port light afore daylight, and by good sun-up there wasn't a sail of her in sight.

"Well, it didn't come to blow same's Wesley thought it would and, nacherally, he was roarin' 'round fine. We shook out the reef in the mains'l before noon-time of that first day, and later we set both tops'ls and that whoppin' gauze balloon of the *Lucy's*. And she carried 'em easy, too. We warn't loafing altogether; we was makin' twelve knots right straight along. But that wasn't pleasing Wesley.

"Next day and the next it was the same story, and part of the next day it was lighter yet. We hove the log, and got only ten knots for twenty-four hours hand-runnin'. Then, almost all at once, from a nice summer breeze it jumped to a gale. And it was a gale—one of those healthy, able zephyrs that makes up north there and gets a good runnin' start afore it tears things loose in the forties.

"Whoo-o-ish it whistled! A regular old buster of a no'theaster—whoo-o-ish!—and Wesley dancin' on and off the break while he watched it comin' on. 'I'm thinkin',' he says, 'we can stow some of those summer kites for a while. Might put the tops'ls in gaskets, boys, and that balloon in stops. We won't be likely to need them any more this trip. This is the breeze I've been waiting for—struck in a little late, but it'll make up for lost time soon.'

"And it sure was making up for lost time. The mains'l pretty soon had to be tucked up, and on the next day tucked again. And before another day we had to take it in altogether, get the trys'l out the hold and fit that on. Now you know it was blowing some when Wesley Marrs had the *Lucy* under a trys'l and he on a racin' passage, for a thousand dollars; and, what was more, the name of the thing after they got into Gloucester.

"We went that way for thirty-odd hours, and Wesley was almost satisfied. 'Maybe,' says he, 'if this fine breeze holds, we'll make up for those yachtin' days in the fifties. What kind of weather, fellows, do you s'pose the *Bounding Billow's* making of it? Think now she's handling it like the *Lucy?* I'd give something to know if she's carryin' a whole fores'l and both jibs right now. Boys,' he says, 'but this is fine weather. In forty-eight hours, and this fine breeze holds, we'll be raisin' Thatcher's twin lights!' Wesley was mighty well satisfied with the way things was lookin' just then.

"That was Friday night late. After midnight it was, for I went on watch at twelve o'clock. I remember well Wesley and Murdie Greenlaw at the wheel when I came out of the cabin door to go for'ard. We was driving through it and she layin' over. Man, but she was layin' over. I'll tell you how she was layin' over. That very afternoon it was that Billie Henderson had walked along her weather run from her stern to her fore-rigging. You've heard of that trick, some of you. Yes, sir—we had a line on him in case he slipped—that's the truth.

"Well, it must have been getting on toward one o'clock, for I was figuring on being called aft to take the wheel for my second hour; and then in one more hour a fellow could go below and dry off and have a good sleep. We were driving through it —jib, jumbo, fores'l and trys'l. We hadn't seen the top of her port-rail for more than two days; and this was one of those nights when the water gets full of phosphorus. It'd been a new moon gone down, and rain that morning, and you all know how the water fires after rain and a new moon. It was fair afire now. And the *Lucy!* she was leapin' from the top of one sea to the top of another. We made a lane you could see for a cable length behind, and there was blue smoke, I swear, coming from each side.

"Her nose would poke under and we would get it all over. I had my elbow crooked in the fore-rigging so I wouldn't wash off. When she'd rise, she'd throw the water over her shoulder, and it'd run the whole length of her deck and race over the taffrail. That was only the spray, mind you. She was taking it over the rail all the time, besides, as if she had no rail at all. The skipper and Murdie at the wheel must've been pulp. Three or four others were in the waist—five or six men besides the skipper had to be on deck all the time. We was all in oilskins and red-jacks, of course, and we was all properly soaked.

"Well, we was whoopin' along; we'd just shot by some lumberin' old tramp steamer that was making awful bad weather of it, and somebody in the waist'd just called out, 'We're this far, anyway, thank the Lord.' The cook had his head out the fo'c's'le gangway—just a narrow slit to sing out to us on deck—when we saw the skipper jump into the main riggin' and look ahead, and then jump back on deck again as if he saw a ghost. He hollers:

"'If there ain't the Englishman ahead, and carryin' a two-reefed mains'l! A two-reefed mains'l! And goin' like a liner! I'll be damned if I'll stand on the deck of the *Lucy Foster* and see the *Bounding Billow* beat her home. I'll bust the *Lucy's* spars, but I'll beat him. Bend on the stays'l. I guess the *Lucy* can carry as much sail as that window-frame boat. Bend on that stays'l.'

"You can bet that shook the boys up. A stays'l! And her planks rattlin' then! Dan Ross—big Dan that was lost on the *Fredonia* afterward—Dan was nearest me under the weather rail. He says, 'I'll fix that stays'l.' And he did fix her, as he thought. He yanks the halyards loose and they goes flyin' aloft. We could just make them out slinging between the fore and main rigging—like long devils, with the block on the end.

"Dan hollers out: 'Stays'l halyard-ends loose and can't get hold of 'em—they're aloft.'

"The skipper says: 'Go after them.'

"Dan roars back: 'What do you take me for?'

"'For a man,' hollers the skipper; 'but I guess I was mistaken.'

"'Show me a man crazy enough to go after them,' says Dan.

"'Here's one,' roars the skipper, and so help me, if he didn't start aloft. Blowing? My blessed soul, we needed cotton hooks to hang on by. The boys was curled up under the wind'ard rail with their fingers into the ring-bolts. And up went Wesley Marrs—to looard, mind you. And however he managed it—we couldn't half make out what he was doing up there—but he got hold of them.

"Down he comes with the ends fast around his waist. 'Here,' he says to Dan, 'take hold of that.' He unwound about two fathom of it. 'That's one end of the stays'l halyards you run aloft a little while back. And see now if you can hang on to it, so's better men than yourself won't have to go aloft in a gale to get them down again. Now then, up with that stays'l. Call all hands for'ard there, cook—and call all hands aft there, Murdie—and up with that stays'l! Up with it.'

"And up she went. Such a slattin' afore we got her up! But she got there—and then! If she was leapin' before she was high-diving now. The water was firing like I was telling you, firing like an ocean of big diamonds and white sulphur mixed; and there was that blue smoke you could almost smell coming out from both sides of her wake. I misdoubted if we'd ever get home. If I'd had a knife handy, you'd have seen the stays'l go into the sky. But I didn't have a knife, nor nobody else on deck, and all we could do was to hope we'd get in to walk down Main Street just once again, and swearin' we'd never ship another trip with that crazy Wesley Marrs, so long's we lived again. Yes, sir, that was an awful run home. We carried our stays'l past the Point. And that's the same *Lucy* and the same Wesley Marrs coming in the dock there now."

"And what happened to the *Bounding Billow?* Did you pass her?"

"The *Bounding Billow?* Hell, no. We got in Monday morning at five o'clock. There warn't any *Bounding Billow* in sight that night—just one of them ghost dreams of Wesley's. The Englishman didn't get along till about the middle of the week."

"And what did he have to say?"

"The Englishman? Oh, he said—but hold up a second and see what that telephone wants, one of you."

"It's the office, Petie. They want to know what Captain Marrs got."

"Oh, all right. He'll make fast and be up the wharf in a minute, tell them. He's getting ready to step ashore now."

It was a man of medium height and easy swing who came up the dock with half his crew in tow. He had the sunburned skin of a healthy boy and the vigorous jaw of a man of action. He spat out tobacco-juice as he rolled along, but his teeth showed white and even when he grinned up at the look-out. It was the voice of a moderate blow, a summer gale at play, that answered the hail from Crow's Nest.

"Hulloh, Peter," it roared. "Any signs of fish up there, boy?"

"Hulloh, skipper. What you got?"

"Four hundred barrels."

"Good. Where'd you get 'em?"

"Off Monhegan mostly. One school off Middle Bank on the way down. All medium schools. How's the market?"

"Fourteen and a quarter to-day."

"Good. Report me to the office, will you?—four hundred barrels. Come along down, Peter, and wash the gurry out your throat. Tell 'em all up there to come."

"In a minute. Here, Johnnie"—Peter lit on a boy of tender years, a boy of an age that ordinarily would not have been allowed to breathe this smoky atmosphere, but in this case a boy who was sometimes suffered to skirt the edge of the blessed circle because of his tractable ways and certain useful connections. He was a purveyor of supplies and a nephew of the firm, a willing boy and not too obtrusive. "Here, Johnnie, telephone the office that the *Lucy Foster* hails for four hundred barrels, small schools and fine fish—and take charge while we're gone. We'll be at the Anchorage—if anything heaves in sight. But make sure before you disturb us; don't get worried by any coasters or yachts, mind. Do a good job now, and I'll tell your uncle about you, and maybe some day he'll let you have a vessel of your own. Come along, fellows, and p'r'aps we can get it out of Wesley himself just what the Englishman did say after he got in and found the *Lucy* three days before him."

And down the winding stairs the chief look-out and his staff worked their way. It was tack and jibe, until they reached the street below; then it was wear off and a straight run of it, in the wake of Wesley to the Anchorage.

Up in the Crow's Nest the flag went to the mast-head for the *Lucy Foster,* arrived with four hundred barrels of fine mackerel. And Johnnie, a born hero-worshipper, looked out to sea for incoming fishermen, bravely chanting over and over:

"I'll bust her spars,"
Says Wesley Marrs,
"But I'll beat the *Boundin' Billow.*"

# III

## "ECHO O' THE MORN"

In the harbor of Halifax, a hundred sail or so of the American seining fleet, Gloucestermen mostly, had come flying in before a smoky sou'wester. Supper finished and clothes-bags overhauled, the men were disposed to go ashore and explore the slopes of the city, where, it was hoped, some relaxation might be found while the gale should be blowing by outside.

Fishermen in port have many methods of dispelling care; but this tale concerns only the fancies of a choice dozen or so, who, on this particular night, chose to gather in a retired back-room on a side street not far removed from the big government dry-dock. Here, in snug privacy, behind close-drawn curtains, were recounted tales of other days and other ports, while, in a hearty, sociable, unhurried way, the flowing bowl went round.

These were master fishermen, skippers all, barring one—"Sylvie's passenger"—so rated because he was aboard the *North Wind,* of which Sylvester Warren was master, solely for pleasure. The passenger's presence has but little to do with the story, and would not have been mentioned at all, were it not that because of his extreme ignorance of certain fishing history, the story-tellers of the evening at times went into detail, which, for themselves, they would have ignored.

It was really in deference to the passenger that Wesley Marrs, masking his narrative beneath explanations to his fellow-skippers, tried to set forth clearly, without going to too great a length, the peculiar ways of Billie Simms, whose temperament, it would seem, was known to the mariners present as though it were that of a brother. "It's your watch, Wesley," somebody had said, and Wesley's speech, after he had rekindled his pipe, flowed from him quite as the good ale gurgles from the fresh-tapped keg, with little spurts and gushes at times, but never slacking, and with a head of speed that told of the great store behind. The gathering knew that now they had got him on deck, Wesley was good to hold the wheel till daylight.

"You're right about the Portugee, Sylvie, he could crack on with the best of 'em"—the last tale had been of desperate sail-carrying. "You're right," went on Wesley, "he'd hang on 'bout's long as anybody, after he'd got educated up to it. To my way of thinking, the Portuguee and Tom O'Donnell and Billie Simms and a few others'll get their happiness in the next world by being made skippers of vessels that can't be druv under, nor turned over, with spars that can't be busted, and sails that can't be stirred from the hoops. But Billie Simms was something more than just a driver. Billie had original ideas.

"There was the time up Iceland way, when he thought he'd like to remember some Gloucester and Boston friends and he takes aboard one of those Iceland donkeys and three blue foxes. And he talked blue foxes to us till ten more of us got blue foxes—he had a way of describing things till you felt as'f there was nothing on earth so desirable as the things he was talking about. So we set sail from Rikievik this time with the donkey and thirteen of those blue Iceland foxes. The donkey was all right. We made a little stall for him on deck, just aft the main hatch, and all we had to do was to feed him reg'lar and run him 'round the house every morning for exercise, with a painter to him, so if he rolled overboard we could haul him back. It was when the foxes got loose down the hold and set up such an awful barkin' that we couldn't sleep night or day, that our troubles began. Man, there was the job—to get them foxes in the hold. Chasin' polar bears on the ice, like Prentice was telling about awhile ago, ain't a mark to crawlin' after blue foxes in close quarters. They used to get between the top of the fish and the deck—'bout a foot and a half space—and we had to go and grab 'em. Bare hands? Of course. And when we'd begin to crowd 'em in a corner, their eyes'd shine, and—give me the polar bears with axes—if the axes are sharp. But that ain't what I had in mind to tell—give me a match, somebody—I can never keep a pipe agoin' when I get started talking. That's it, boy. I'll tell you 'bout a real lively trip with Billie Simms, where we did take a chance once."

Puff—puff—puff, went Wesley, smoking up, and then he laid his course afresh.

"Some of you, maybe, have got this story straight before, but some of you never got it first hand, may be, and, anyway, your passenger, Silvie, might like to hear exactly how it did happen.

"It was right on this very Nova Scotia coast that we were seining the summer I'm talking about. It's Billie and the *Echo o' the Morn,* I'm talking about now. Billie used to be a dog after mackerel those days. He'd get 'em, if there was any around to get. This was the height of the time when so many American vessels was being seized by the English cutters for fishing inside the three-mile limit. You know what hard feelings there used to be between the Canadians and our fellows about fishing inside the shore line. American fishermen were being fined right and left, the Gover'ment at Washington was doing little but make talk, and at home, in Gloucester, everybody was boiling over about it.

"The Clayton brothers owned the *Echo*. They're out of business now, but some of you had dealings with 'em may be. One was strong on religion—had Bibles fore and aft on every one of his vessels—and the other was a hot sport, and on account of their difference of opinion, they used to split on the names of the vessels. That's how there came the *Mutineer,* then the *Peace on Earth;* then the *Buccaneer,* and the *Three Shepherds.* The *Avenger* and the *Good Will to Men* was launched the same week, and the *Roisterer* was chased off the stocks by the *Echo o' the Morn.* I mind well the launchin' of 'em both.

"But if they split on the names, they had identical ideas 'bout skippers and crews. 'Read the Bible, men,' the old fellow would say, 'and abide by what you find therein.' We all found some pretty husky fighting men in that same Bible. The other brother's instructions to skippers was mostly, 'Bring home the fish.'

The *Echo* was just off the stocks, and a handsome vessel to look at, and I mind the curiosity of the Gover'ment sailing cutters down this way to try tacks with her. We went along for quite a while without getting more than our share of official calls from the cutters—they were slow in the stays, most of 'em. We used to keep track of the cutters, read the battles in the old man's Bibles reg'lar, and keep a sharp watch for fish aloft.

"As the *Echo's* hull was beginning to get known along the coast, they begins to crowd us pretty close. And one day they ketched us at what they said was inside the three-mile limit, where, of course, we had no business to be—if we was inside. I don't know yet whether we was inside the line or not, and I wouldn't hold back the truth of it now, but anyway they said we was. They always gave themselves the benefit of any doubts, these lads, when they were dealing with American fishermen. There was two of 'em and a steam cutter. It was no disgrace, p'raps, it being a flat calm and they mounting two guns apiece, but they had the laugh on us, the two cutters, and they walked us into Barnsley between them, the sailing lad to wind'ard, where Billie said she'd never got by rights, and the steam fellow to looard. Into the harbor of Barnsley they walked us, with two hundred salted barrels of mackerel in our hold.

"They made the *Echo* fast to the dock, stripped the sails off her the first thing and put them in a sail-loft near by. Then they asked Billie to step up to the custom-house, where they asked him a lot of questions, which he didn't answer gen'rally, and when he did, they didn't put them down, Billie being a bit hot.

"The crew was all turned loose, of course. It was the vessels they wanted, they used to say. They'd set a fine, they said, and they'd have no trouble getting it, for if the owners didn't settle, they'd sell the *Echo* at public auction and get it that way. There was a Gloucester vessel caught two weeks ahead of us and fined $3,000.

"Things looked bad for the *Echo*. Billie telegraphed to the owners how it happened. I was there when he wrote the message. 'Don't do anything till you hear further from me. Maybe we can settle to better advantage at this end,' was the winding up of it. 'Everybody in the place here will know what the message said inside of an hour,' Billie said, coming out of the telegraph office. And they did. They was laughing at us and asking what soft kind of a settlement we expected to make with the Provincial Gover'ment.

"Next mornin' Billie just laid around and waited. In the afternoon he took a couple of us and a small boat and we sailed out to where the two cutters were anchored, three or four cable-lengths off-shore. Billie had a talk with the Captain of the steam cutter, which was abreast the sailing lad, less than a cable's length between them, in a place where the harbor made a kind of a neck. 'I tell you, Captain,' says Billie, looking across the way, 'a vessel that tried to sail out of here unbeknownst would get the devil, wouldn't she—having to go between you two?'

"'That's what she would,' said the Captain. My, but he laughed just to think of it.

"'It would be a good harbor, this one,' says Billie again, taking a look around, 'If 'twas only a mite wider up here.'

"'Well, it's wide enough below,' says the Captain. 'Deep water clear up to the shore. A blind man could pilot a vessel in and out here. He'd only have to keep her off the rocks.' Then he takes Billie down below and tells him all about the steam gear. 'Ready to move at half a minute's notice,' he says, when he comes up on deck again. 'You can't expect to get ahead of one of these machines with a sailing vessel,' he says—'not when her machinery is in working order.'

"'I see,' says Billie, 'not when the steam gear's clear.'

"Then we gets into the small boat again and sails around to have a look at the harbor, which was just about as they said it was—deep water to the shore. The last thing Billie said when he stepped out of the small boat was: 'This time t'morrow morning the tide'll be 'bout like it is now.' It was past three o'clock then, and the tide a fair ebb.

"That night about ten o'clock it was pretty quiet in Barnsley. We warn't very much surprised when Billie passed the word, in a quiet way, to slip the boarding-house we were staying at, and meet him outside. Billie soon told us what the game was, and we started right away. Four of us dropped down to the sail-loft, caught the watchman, gagged him, and tied him up. He wouldn't tell us where the key was, and we broke in the door. We found the *Echo's* sails done up in packages, sealed up fine with red wax—all official. We rolled the watchman up in some old sail, so he wouldn't ketch cold through the night, and then we hustled our packages down to the dock. We met a lad on the way who wanted to know what we was at. We tied him up, and took him along.

"We found Billie had everything ready at the dock, with the vessel's two custom-house watchmen and the dock watchman all tied up nice, and laid near the dock shed. We set our man alongside the others, and they laid there in a row with not a sound out of them, they being all gagged.

"We then started to bend on the sails. And let me tell you we druv things. Two of the crew stayed up to the street end of the dock to take care of any curious person that might happen to start to stroll down to take a look at the *Echo*. There was three of that kind, dark as it was. The three of them was captured, two of them policemen. Fitting on the sails we couldn't find any main tops'l in the bunch. We must have left it behind, but we couldn't stop to go back after it to the sail-loft. We were driving you see, trying to get ready in time for the ebb tide, and out the harbor before daylight. We was all strung up, of course, thinking of what we had ahead of us. We were pretty near done with the sails, only the head sails left to fit on, when somebody said: 'Skipper, what about the steam cutter? Think we'll get by her?'

"Billie studied awhile. 'I've been thinking of her, and I guess we'd better tend to her now. Wesley, you, Hiram and Mike Feeney come with me. The rest of you'll have time to fit those jibs while we're gone.'

"Billie tells us to get up about twenty fathom of small chain and a small anchor out of the hold and put them into the dory—the dory and seine-boat was astern the *Echo.* We then paddles over toward the steam cutter. Well, now you c'n believe we did some gentle rowin' toward that cutter—oars tied up in old rags, and the chain wrapped in blankets out of the bunks below, for the first three or four fathom.

"Billie himself goes overboard when we were under the stern of the cutter. We paid the chain out to him, handing it out, link by link, as if we was handing out men's lives. Billie drops under and toggles the cutter's screws with the chain—takes two or three turns around each blade. Man, but he did a careful job! When he gets back in the dory again—a water rat wouldn't ha' made so little noise—we paid out the chain—careful—oh, careful—and paddles away. When we got the chain's length out, we lowered the little anchor to the bottom, easy as could be, with a small line. Then we worked back to the *Echo,* where they had everything ready to leave.

"We warped her out of the dock—oh, first, Mike Feeney goes up and covers up our row of prisoners under the shed, gives 'em a drink all 'round, and left 'em. They were found there in the morning, I s'pose.

"So we warped her clear of the dock—the sails had been hoisted afore we stirred at all, and you may be sure we had the masts and hoops pretty well slushed. We bore down on the two cutters. By their lights we knew they were laying broadside to each other, up and down stream just as they lay that afternoon. We knew we couldn't get outside either one, so Billie pointed the *Echo* up to go between. The wind was all right—not enough for fine work—but enough for the trick, and Billie callated the tide 'bout right—it was with us.

"We bore down. Of course, we was praying to get by without being seen. But it wasn't quite dark enough for that. Our sails must've showed, for we hadn't got between them at all, when there came a hail from the steam cutter—to port she was—'What vessel's that?' We stood on a little longer, and she hailed again, and the sailin' cutter—to wind'ard—she hailed too, and they both hailed as if they meant business—'What vessel's that?'

"Billie standin' by the wheel, sings out: 'We'er the *Echo o' the Morn,* seiner, of Gloucester. Report me, will you, tomorrow? The harbor master was off duty, and the customhouse was closed when we left.'

"When he got that out we could hear the greatest racket on both cutters. They began to sing out—wind'ard and loo'ard both—'Put about or we'll fire,' says one. 'Go back or we'll sink you,' hollers the other.

"'Fire and sink hell,' says Billie. 'You'll only sink yourselves firin' across at each other.' Which was right.

"They shut up for a few seconds. Then we heard the orders to make sail aboard one and the bells from the bridge on the other. 'The sailin' lad won't bother us,' says Billie. 'She's a square-ended old tub, and till they get that collar and necktie off the propeller I don't think the steam boy'll do much either.'

"There certainly must've been some riotin' in the hold of that steam cutter. We heard the orders to slip the cable and we imagined we could hear the engine-room bells her Captain rung from the pilot-house. There was an awful flurry astern of her, and then such howls from above and below, from the bridge and the steam department. 'I callate,' says Billie, 'our little toggle chain and anchor's gone into action.' We were sliding by all the time.

"They let go a couple of shot from their bow, but we were bowlin' along then, all of us lying flat on deck, all but Billie. He stood to the wheel, back to 'em, contemptuous like. 'They're firin' wide,' he says, and out of the harbor he drives her.

"We were barely outside when a big steamer lit up like a barroom passed outside of us and swung in for Barnsley.

"'What do you make of that?' we asks Billie.

"'A cruiser from Halifax, sure's fate, come to take the *Echo* in charge. I guess we'd better take to more private courses before daylight comes along.'

"We put inside the islands along the coast soon's it got so's we could see at all. It was takin' chances going inside and driving her like we were, but we had to. If we stayed outside the cruiser'd get us on her way back. We kept two men to the mast-head all that day, pickin' out channels and passages ahead. There was times when we didn't know whether she'd go another mile or another length ahead, but, as Billie said, 'We got to. Pile her up along here and there's a fighting chance for the owners to get insurance money, while if we go outside, it's all up, and the owners don't get so much as a dollar out of the hull or a single barrel of them mackerel in the hold. If they intended to fine us a couple of thousand dollars afore, they'll fine her all she's worth after this, not to speak of the partic'lar jail we'd fetch up in.' So we druv her along inside the coast islands.

"In the middle of the afternoon the lookouts to the masthead reported smoke to the east'ard and headed our way. We were well on toward Halifax, then—along Egg Island way, twenty odd miles east of here—and Billie says: 'Might's well lay her up here for a while.' So he picked out a cut behind a high island and we slid in there. Some of us went and made a landing in the seine-boat and climbed up the bluff of the island. It was our cruiser of the night before sure enough, and she was everlastin'ly poundin' along. We laid low among the broken rocks, and when she went by we could make out her tops full of lookouts. By and by comes two cutters steamin' along. One of them was our Barnsley cutter—the chain and anchor lad. They went on by, with more racket than so many fire-injins ashore.

"'There'll be a rondeevoo of Her Majesty's naval forces down Massachusetts Bay this time to-morrer,' says Billie, 'and all in honor of the *Echo o' the Morn.*. But we'll beat 'em yet, we'll beat 'em yet. Can't you see the *Echo,* boys, runnin' the blockade? We'll run for Le Have Bank to-night, boys, and we'll beat 'em yet.'

"When dark came, we put to the west'ard and south'ard, and all night long we drove her, everlastin'ly druv her till sun-up, when the log showed a hundred miles since sunset, and we were in among the haddockin' fleet off Le Have. We hunted around for one of the firm's vessels till we found the *Buccaneer.* Crump Taylor was skipper of her then. You all know Crump, of course, so I don't need to tell you about him. Crump hadn't been thinking of going home just then, but he takes all in and comes along when Billie tells him the story. The *Quickstep,* John McLeod, the John McLeod that they call Soudan, he was all filled up and ready to leave for home. He said he'd like mighty well to wait and run home along with the two of us, when Billie told him how things stood. 'Might be of use, you can't tell, and we're most out of grub anyway,' says Soudan.

"Well, we first fits the *Buccaneer's* main tops'l onto the *Echo,* then swaps the *Echo's* seine-boat for the *Buccaneer's* dories—piles the nest of 'em in our waist, making us look like any other haddocker, and the three of us wings it out to the west'ard afore as sweet and fair a breeze as ever fanned a vessel off Le Have.

"That was long 'bout dusk. Night sailin' gen'rally is best in cases like that. The next afternoon we was in sight of Massachusetts Bay, Boston, I might say, when we notices the smoke of a steamer to the west'ard coming our way. The *Buccaneer* right away—that was Crump—he begins to drag behind, and points off no'therly a little—as if she had a mind for a harbor on the Maine coast. And he hauls his seine-boat—the Echo's seine-boat alongside, snug up, as if he wanted to hide it.

"Of course, they warn't letting any manœuvre of that kind get by them on the cruiser, and they makes off after Crump. The *Buccaneer* and the *Echo*, mind, was as like as two number one mackerel. The only difference that day was the *Buccaneer* carried no main tops'l, which, as I said, had been put onto the *Echo*.

"The cruiser comes along and lets go a blank at Crump. He keeps right on. Then in a little while comes another blank, which Crump didn't pay much attention to. Then comes a solid shot, close enough, it looked to us. Crump seemed a bit slow yet, and they sent another solid shot—plump through her fores'l, this one. I guess that was close enough for Crump, and he jams the *Buccaneer* into the wind and waits. Crump told us all about the rest of it afterward, for we, of course, was making long legs of it to the west'ard.

The cruiser's gig comes roundin' to under the *Buccaneer's* stern, where Crump'd hung a piece of old sail, as if he wanted to hide the name, by the way. They rows alongside. A petty officer—a petty officer, mind, as if that was good enough for a fisherman—he steps aboard by way of the seine-boat, which had her name—*Echo o' the Morn*— on her as plain's could be. The navy lad smiles, reads the name, and steps over the *Buccaneer's* rail, looks up aloft, and says, for a starter: 'There's a tops'l up in a Barnsley sail-loft that would come mighty nigh to fitting that main topm'st of yours.'

"He says that and smiles at Crump. Crump leans agin the main riggin' in that easy way of his, and looking up to the mast-head, he says—'It do look kind of bare, don't it?'

"'Yes,' says the navy boy, 'and I s'pose you wish to know what we want?'

"'I can't say's I do,' says Crump.

"'P'raps you would like to hear?'

"'Oh, I dunno's I'll have any melancholy night-watches if I don't hear,' says Crump, 'but if it'll ease *you* any, why, drive her.'

"Well, the cruiser lad goes on with a long mess of stuff about the American schooner, the *Echo o' the Morn,* seized by Her Majesty's cutters—the *Calenso* and the *Seal*—for violation of the International Fishing Laws Treaty, and stolen from the custody of the Dominion Gover'ment's officers on the night of August the twenty-seventh, at Barnsley, Nova Scotia, and, further, there was charges of several assaults and batteries, not only to official persons, but to private persons, and so on. It took him nigh fifteen minutes to tell it all.

"'God save the Queen,' says Crump, and spits over the rail —you know Crump's way—'that's all official, I s'pose.'

"'Yes, sir—and be careful.'" The navy lad was pretty hot.

"'Yes?' says Crump.

"'Yes,' fires back the navy lad.

"'Well, you said it pretty nice, but what's it got to do with me?'

"'What's it got—do you deny that you are the American fishing schooner, the *Echo o' the Morn?*'

"'We're cert'nly a fisherman,' answers Crump, 'there's our gurry kids on deck under your nose, and a hundred thousand of fresh fish in the hold, if you want more proof, and we're cert'nly American—there's our flag to the peak for that—but it's most interestin' news to me that we're the *Echo o' the Morn,* though I'll admit we do look something like her, the two of them havin' been built off the same moulds and rigged to the same plans.'

"The navy lad only grins and looks over the side and points to the name on the seine-boat.

"'Ho, ho,' laughs Crump, as if he'd just caught on, 'ho, ho.' The Englishman smiles and Crump goes on. 'You're the boys for cuteness, you navy lads. But, gen'rally, down our way, when we want to get at a vessel's name, we look at what it says astern of her or on the trail-board under her bow for'ard'; and, mind you, the canvas was hanging over the stern and the letters for'ard so chafed that you couldn't have read 'em twenty feet away.

"The Englishman smiles his everlastin' smile and sings out to his boat's crew to drop astern and look at the name. 'We have to be certain,' he says.

"One of the men in the boat lifts the canvas and peeks underneath.

"'What name?' sings out the petty officer, all ready to smile at Crump.

"'*Buccaneer*, of Gloucester.'

"'What?' he screeches. He runs aft, pulls the canvas clear, leans way over and looks for himself. Then he runs for'ard, bends over the knight-heads, and spells it out there. Back he comes, not quite so spry. 'I've heard of such things as painting over names. Don't carry this thing too far,' he bellows at Crump.

"'Yes,' says Crump, 'it do look like fresh paint, don't it?'

"'That will do,' roars the navy lad. 'Where are your papers?'

"Crump makes a great bluff to study some more. Fin'lly he says, turning to the crew: 'Boys, let you all bear witness to this thing, for a claim for damages'll come out of it sure's I'm skipper of this vessel and my name's Henry Taylor. This man—bear witness to all I say, boys—this man is acting outside of his rights now, but it must never be said that Gloucester fishermen don't abide by the law.' And he goes on for ten minutes or so in a patriotic way till the navy lad won't stand for any more of it. After that Crump uses up about twenty minutes finding his papers below. Of course the papers were all right. When the Englishman, after looking them all over, had handed them back, and as they were going up on deck again, Crump says, 'Of course I might've shifted those papers, too, or made 'em myself or something like that. If you like you can step down to the fo'c's'le and see whether all the tin pans and cook's dishes is properly marked, or——'

"'You could have exchanged outfits just the same. You could have met this vessel—' My, but he was hoppin' 'round, accordin' to Crump, and you oughter heard Crump tell it.

"'Yes,' goes on Crump, 'maybe, and swapped suits of sails, too. In the leach of that fores'l that's handy to you there maybe you c'n make out where the word *Buccaneer* is stencilled on—not that I ain't saying it wouldn't be possible to swap sails, too—I've heard of such things as fitting on sails in a hurry. I've——'

"'That will do. Where'd you get that seine-boat?'

"'And of course,' goes on Crump, paying no attention, 'the

*Echo o' the Morn,* being a mackerel catcher, would be likely to have gurry kids all over her deck, wouldn't she? and her hold full of fresh haddock and cod and the like. Lift the main hatch there, boys, and show the gentleman.'

"'Where did you get that seine-boat?' yelled the navy boy.

"'On La Have,' yells back Crump. 'Blowed aboard on La Have at the same time we lost our dories and our tops'l. An awful blow. In all my experience——'

"'A blow on La Have? See here, there's been no blow off that way reported in Halifax lately.'

"'Maybe not—maybe—but there's lots of things happens on La Have that ain't reported in Halifax.'

"The Englishman was fair boiling now, but at the same time he was beginning to come out of his dream. All of a sudden, Crump says, he puts his glasses onto the *Echo* and the *Quickstep* and then all at once he wakes up, jumps into the gig, and sings out, 'Pull away, pull.'

"'Good-by,' calls out Crump after him in his sociable way, 'and next time you happen to be in Barnsley you might send me that tops'l you think would fit us so well. Mark it "Henry C. Taylor, Master Schooner *Buccaneer,* Gloucester, Massachusetts, U. S. A.," and I'll be sure to get it. Good-by,' hollers Crump again, 'and I'll pay the freight,' but he says he didn't get any answer.

"Well, the cruiser was pretty near hull down to us on the *Echo* when she come 'round on her heel again, thanks to Crump, and it was getting pretty late in the afternoon. We could see by the way smoke was coming out of her that they were driving her. But the wind holding, we knew she couldn't get us short of two hours, and that gave us time to do something, with the night coming on.

"The last thing we did on the *Echo* for the cruiser's partic'lar benefit was to rig up our side-lights on the blades of two long seiner's oars and lash 'em straight up in a dory. That raised them up about as high as side-lights ought to be, y' see, The dory was lowered over the side and I dropped into her. Billie heaves a splitting knife after me, and says, 'You'll need that.' There was an everlastin' long painter—a forty-fathom line—coiled in her bow. Billie hails Soudan and tells him what to do. Soudan throws the *Quickstep* up and waits for us. The *Echo* hauls across the *Quickstep's* bow and Billie casts me off. I hove the long painter to the *Quickstep* and they takes it and drops me astern. The *Echo* goes winging off with nary a light up at all, and me in the dory, and the dory like any vessel with her lights up proper being towed along to beat the devil, in the wake of the *Quickstep,* and she hauling away for Minot's Light as if she was crazy to get to Boston.

"When the cruiser overhauled us—I could hear her screws long before she got to us—she ranges up to starboard and sings out for us to heave to. 'Both of you,' hollers the voice. I couldn't see her clear, except for her lights, but I could hear her plain enough, for she lets go a blank at the same time that makes me feel like curling up in the dory. 'Blessed Lord,' thinks I, 'if ever they send one of those six-inch boys aboard o' this dory, where'll I be?' I was praying that Soudan wouldn't try any of Crump's tricks and be too slow to come to.

"But Soudan throws her up pretty prompt and waits. Then I heard the cruiser's falls makin' ready to lower away a boat and it was my move. I outs with my splitting knife and cuts down the red light to get that out the way. That being to port, of course they couldn't see it, and I puts it out and heaves it overboard. Then I cuts away the starboard oar below, slashes the lashin's from the light—the green light, toward them—opens the slide, blows out the light and heaves that over—all this jumpin', mind you. Then I cuts the dory's painter free, jumps overboard with the bight of the painter, and hits out for the *Quickstep.* Let me tell you I was drivin'.

"I hadn't got fair started, hauling myself along by the painter and under water most of the time, when I hears:

"'Aboard the le'ward schooner, there! Put up your sidelights again, or we'll fire.'

"Of course I didn't say anything to that, but keeps on.

"They hollers again, gets no answer, and then—boom! Man! And boom!—another one. 'Blessed Lord,' thinks I, 'if one of them goes astray and gets me in the small of the back—' But all the time I was putting in big strokes for the *Quickstep,* my hair fair curlin' up with thinking of one of those shells jibing to wind'ard and ketching me.

"Anyway, I got aboard. It was Soudan helped me over the stern of the *Quickstep.*

"'Are you all right?' he says.

"'All right,' says I, 'but I guess the dory's shook up some.'

"'Yes,' he says. 'They've spoiled her carryin' capacity by this time, I guess. There's number eight—they'll be giving her a broadside soon.' Boom!—Boom!—Boom!—they went. 'Bout this time they must have figured out they'd blown the *Echo* out the water, they stopped shootin'. Then we could hear their boats rowin' our way and soon we made out one of them heading for us. There was a petty officer in charge of the one coming to board us—the same lad that boarded the *Buccaneer*, we found out, when we swapped stories with Crump afterward.

"'I say,' this lad sings out, 'she didn't get away that time, did she?' And he steps over the rail.

"'No,' says Soudan, like a man that'd lost a young wife. 'I guess you fixed her that time.'

"Pretty soon the second boat comes alongside. This one had a sure-enough officer, a lootenant, in charge. He was sorter worked up. 'Captain,' he says to Soudan, 'I'm sorry for those men. Here's all we found, an oar and some pieces of a dory, apparently, and some lines with hooks in a half-barrel—trawls, you call them?'

"'A tub of trawls, I guess,' says Soudan. 'Fetch a torch, boys.' He looks and goes on: 'Yes, that's one of their tubs of trawls, sure enough.'

"'We could find nothing else. Isn't it queer?' says the officer.

"'The tides hereaway are queer,' says Soudan, without so much as a wink. 'We are now over a most peculiar place, on one edge of Middle Bank, in Massachusetts Bay, and there's queerer spots here than was ever in the Bay of Fundy or on the Grand Banks.'

"'Really?' says the officer.

"'Yes,' says Soudan, 'for queer tides and eddies this is the spot. There's been some mysterious disappearances traced to here. But, letting that go, this is a bad business, Lootenant, blowing up the *Echo*.'

"'Yes, it certainly is bad—horrible. But they should not have put the lights out as they did. What were they thinking of—she directly under our guns!'

"'Yes,' says Soudan, 'Billie oughter had more respect for a real man-o'-war. Maybe he thought you was only a cutter in the dark?'

"'Thought? Didn't he see us just before dark, when we boarded the other fellow, the *Buccaneer*?'

"'Yes,' says Soudan, 'he did. He must have. I saw you and he must have. But it's liable to lead to big things, to international complications—in-ter-nation-al compli-ca-tions'—he rolls it out like an election orator—'it may ter-min-ate in bloody war,' says Soudan.

"'War?' says the officer, studying, 'war?'

"'Or eye-dem-ity,' says Soudan, swellin' out with happiness to think of so fine a word just then.

"'Possibly—very likely—yes, yes, most likely,' says the officer. Then he takes down Soudan's full name, name of vessel, name of vessel's owner, gets all the figures he can about the *Echo*—Soudan raising the builder's price a few thousand—gets Billie's name, and names of crew and all that. Then he puts off, goes back to the cruiser, the petty officer with him, and they steams off—her course about east by south, which would clear Cape Sable and put her on her way to Halifax, where I s'pose she got in next night with her bearings all hot and a great tale to tell.

"Next morning, when we came into Gloucester in the *Quickstep,* there was the *Echo* lying in the stream and her colors all set, the sassiest-looking vessel in the whole North Atlantic. The city was just getting warmed up to the thing when we arrived. The newspapers had been full of the seizure down East. England, they said, was trying to crowd us on the fishery laws and the United States was a little slow picking it up, and so the country was boiling over when they heard about the *Echo's* escape. It was speeches, mass meetings and editorials—all hot—and lots of people got a chance to blow off steam. When the *Echo* was reported escaped, there warn't many ever really thought she'd get by the cutters and the cruiser that was known to be after her. Then there was the three days or so when they didn't know where she was. So all Gloucester came running down to the docks when the word was passed that she was home. 'The *Echo's* in—the *Echo's* in,' was ringing all over Gloucester like a fire alarm. The *Quickstep* and *Buccaneer* coming in four or five hours afterward, had cannons fired for 'em as they sailed up the harbor, but that was only the overflow—it was the *Echo's* crew that got it. People came from everywhere to look at the *Echo* and shake hands with Billie and us. It was Captain William Simms and the darin' crew of the *Echo o' the Morn.* Yes, sir. They wrote songs about it—and City Hall was lit up and there was bonfires in the middle of Main Street. And there was parades with red and blue and green lights and all kinds of queer fireworks. One showed the *Echo* running through a fleet of men-o'-war, every blessed one of 'em blazing broadsides at her and she never losing a spar. For a few days lots of people didn't do a tap of work —just stood on the curb-stones and talked about the *Echo*. Whenever one of us showed upthere'd be a rush and we'd have to tell how it happened all over again. We was given the freedom of the city, which meant, as Hiram Whitaker said, that you could go into any bar-room in Gloucester and order all the drinks you wanted and as many times as you wanted and not be allowed to pay for 'em. Hiram cert'nly got drunk that week. There was a purse made up and we got a hundred and fifty dollars apiece out of that, besides a good share from the two hundred barrels in her hold, which fetched patriotic prices, everybody wantin' to get hold of some of the *Echo's* mackerel. It beat reg'lar fishin' all out. Billie got a big solid silver punch-bowl, and there was smaller bowls for the rest of us, and they gave me a monstrous big meersh'm pipe, gold mounted, with my name in gold letters on the case. That was for standing by the lights in the dory, they said. And—what you say? Ever smoke that pipe? H-m-m—no more than I'm smoking this one now—I wonder how long it's been out. If somebody'll give me another match—and is there anything at all left in that bowl there, Sylvie?"

"There's a good round left yet, Wesley."

"Enough to sluice out the scuppers with?"

"Just about. And the passenger here wants to know if you'll sing one of the *Echo's* songs—the one they sang at the big banquet. You got time. Just a second now, Wesley, boy. Wait till I fill this glass. There!—there's one swashing over the rail for you. Here you go, Prentice—here's for you, John Harkins, and pass that to the passenger. All you others reach over and get your own, and stand by while Wesley sings. Hold up a second yet—draw the curtains there and let in a little light—the sun's most up. Might's well open up the windows and let some of this smoke blow away—it's as thick as any banker's fo'c's'le on the run home. Smells fine and sweet, that, don't it? It's the last of the sou'wester—there'll be mackerel schoolin' after this little blow. Maybe a full hold for some of us to-day, if cutters don't get too fresh. Well, here's a shoot and devil take the cutters—no, no, they have that for their work, I s'pose. Here's to fish a plenty for all of you, and to the *Echo o' the Morn*. And now drive her, Wesley, drive her. And stand by all hands while Wesley sings."

So Wesley sang. His attitude was characteristic—left hand deep in his waistband pocket and right hand gripping his glass; one shoulder braced to wind'ard and feet well apart, to meet the heave of the deck, evidently; eyes bent on the lookouts at the forem'st-head and a voice pitched to reach that same forem'st-head with certainty, against a fresh and rising head breeze—standing so, as if he were to the wheel, Wesley sang the ballad of the *Echo o' the Morn.*. Twelve or fourteen good stanzas there were, the plain tale of the *Echo,* not forgetting her crew and those very able auxiliaries, "Crump" Taylor and "Soudan" McLeod:

From the loft we took her sails, and bent 'em in the night,
And sailed her out the harbor, with cutters left and right.

. . . . . . . . . . . . .

Sou'west by su'the we drove her till the sea was fair aroar,
And we never touched a halyard as to La Have we bore.

. . . . . . . . . . . . .

Lights out and southern courses, let her head come round,
Devil take the British forces, here's the *Echo* homeward bound.

Crump Taylor towed her seine-boat, Soudan towed her lights,
And the *Echo* slipped the cruiser in the darkness of the night.

. . . . . . . . . . . . .

So Wesley sailed the *Echo* again, omitting not a single course of the lively vessel nor a single order of the audacious Billie, sailed her from the dock at Barnsley, out the harbor, down the coast, off to La Have Bank, westerly again, across the Bay of Fundy and into Massachusetts Bay, till at length he sailed her up the harbor of Gloucester and rounded her to off the owner's dock, very proudly, with colors gaily flying, to main peak and both trucks. Wesley's fellow skippers entered heartily into the chorus. "Drive her, boys, drive her—give her a full now and drive her," they said. And under Wesley's pilotage they drove her:

Here's to the keel of her, here's to the sails of her,
The mast and the hemp and the deck and the rails of her;
Here's to the length, and the depth, and the beam of her,
To every blessed plank and bolt and every blessed seam of her.
Here's to the everlastin' glory of the *Echo o' the Morn.*

And—

May she live to sail away, to the boom o' Judgment-day,
When we hope to see her sailin' to the toot of Gabr'el's horn.

With feet well braced and bodies swaying, the skippers roared the toast after a fashion that must have carried every syllable of every line to every awakening sleeper in the block.

They themselves liked the effect of it so well that they sang it over again, and it was to the long roll of one particularly sluggish line,

> To every blessed plank and bolt and every blessed seam of her,

that they heaved themselves out and down the side street. From here, with the rhythmic tramp of mariners ashore, they wore into the main street, bore s'utherly, chanting all the while, though soberly and with less exuberation now, for the city was coming awake and beginning to stare. And by and by they jibed over to their dock, where boisterous crews in waiting were trolling farewell ditties of their own.

They piled into their seine-boats, and with long oars and a monstrous big one steering they all drove out into the harbor. They raced past the big dry dock, past the revenue cutters, their hereditary enemies, past the Admiral's great battle-ship and her attendant cruisers—the best part of the British North Atlantic squadron—past all these and other miscellaneous craft, until, with the booming of the morning gun from the Citadel, they were in among their own again.

# IV

## TRUTH OF THE CROMWELL

Martin Carr and John Marsh were hauling trawls, when a sea capsized their dory. The same sea washed them both clear of the dory. John Marsh could not swim. It looked as if he had hauled his last trawl, and so beyond all question he had, but for Martin, who seized one of their buoy-kegs, which happened to bob up near by, and pushed it into John's arms.

"Hang on for your life, John!" said Martin, and himself struck out for the dory, knowing that the buoy could not support two. It was perhaps forty feet to the bottom of the dory—not a great swim, that; but this was a winter's day on the Grand Banks, and a man beaten back by a rough sea and borne down by the weight of heavy clothing, oilskins, and big jackboots. When he had fought his way to the dory he had to wait a while before he dared try to climb up on it, he was that tired; and after he got there he found no strap to the plug, and so nothing to hang on to. He remembered then that he and John had often spoken of fixing up a strap for the plug, but had never fixed it.

"My own neglect," muttered Martin, "and now I'm paying for it."

Clinging to the smooth planking on the bottom of the dory was hard work that day, and becoming harder every minute, for the sea was making. And there was John to keep an eye on. "How're you making out, Johnnie-boy?" he called.

"It's heavy dragging, but I'm all right so far," John answered.

"And how is it with you now, Johnnie-boy?" he called in a little while again.

"I can hang on a while yet, Martin."

"Good for you!" said Martin to that.

"Can you see the vessel?" asked John after another space.

"He's giving out, and I see no vessel," thought Martin, but answered cheerily, "Aye, I see her."

"And how far away is she, and what's she doing?"

Aloud Martin said, "Five or six miles, maybe, up to wind'ard; and she's taking aboard all but the last dory, and there's men gone aloft to look for us." But under his breath, "And God forgive me if I go to my death with that lie on my lips; but 'tis no deeper than my lips—no deeper."

Then they waited and waited, until John said, "Martin, I'll have to go soon—I can't hang on much longer."

"Bide a while, Johnnie-boy—bide a while. Dory-mates we've been for many a trip—bide a while with me now, Johnnie."

But Martin knew that it would be for but a little while for John—for them both, if help did not come soon. Scanning the sea for whatever hope the sea might give, he saw the trawl-line floating on the water. If he could but get hold of that line he could draw the buoy and John to the dory, with a better chance to talk to him—to put heart into him, for Johnnie was but a lad, no more than five and twenty.

To get the line, he would have to swim; and to swim any distance in that rising and already bad sea he would have to cast off most of his clothing. And with most of his clothing gone he would not last too long. Certainly if the vessel did not get them by dark, he would never live through the night. He would freeze to death—that he knew well. But could he live through the night, anyway? And even if he could—— But what was the good of thinking all night over it? He pulled off his boots, his oilskins, hauled off his heavy outer woolens.

"Johnnie-boy, can you hang on a while longer?"

"I dunno, Martin—I dunno. Where's the vessel?-"

"She's bearing down, John." And with the thought of that second lie on his lips Martin scooped off for the buoy-line, which, after a battle, he grabbed and towed back to the dory. It was a hard fight, and he would have liked well to rest a while; but there was Johnnie. So in he hauled many a long fathom of slack ground-line, with gangings and hooks, and after that the buoy-line. He sorrowfully regarded the fine fat fish that he passed along; every hook seemed to have a fish on it. "Man, man, but 'twas only last night I baited up for ye in the cold hold of the vessel—baited with the cold frozen squid, and my fingers nigh frost-bitten." But every hook was bringing him nearer to his dory-mate.

He felt the line tauten at last. "Have a care now, Johnnie, while I draw you to me," and hauled in till Johnnie was alongside.

But "Good-by," said Johnnie ere yet Martin had him safe.

"Not yet, Johnnie-boy," said Martin, and reached for him and held him up and lashed him to the buoy. "You can rest your arms now, lad," he said, and Johnnie gratefully let go.

"'Tis made of iron a man should be that goes winter trawling," said Martin, and up on the bottom of the dory he climbed again, this time with infinite difficulty.

They had had the leeward berth and now were farthest from the vessel, and by this time it was dark. But Martin knew the Skipper would not give them up in a hurry, as he explained to John. And by and by they saw the torches flare up.

"Wait you, John," said Martin then, "and save your strength. I'll hail when I think they're near enough to hear." Which he did, in a voice that obeyed the iron will and carried far across the waters.

Then the vessel saw them and bore down, the Skipper to the wheel and the men lining the rail.

"Be easy with John," said Martin to the man who first stretched his arms out, "I'm thinking he's nigh gone."

"*Nigh* gone? He *is* gone," as they lifted John aboard.

"But all right with him now," they said as they passed him along the deck. "And how is it with yourself, Martin?" they asked him as he was about to step over the rail.

"Fine and daisy," said Martin. "How is it yourself, boy?" stepping jauntily up, and then, unable longer to stand, flopping back against the vessel's rail.

Seeing how it had been with him, they made him go below also, which he, with shipmates helping, did; and also, later, put on the dry shift of clothes they made ready. In the middle of it all he asked, "Where's Johnnie?"

"In his bunk—and full of hot coffee—where you'll be in a minute."

"Where I'll be? And my dory yet to be hoisted in. No, no!"

"Your dory, Martin? Why, she's in, drained dry and griped long ago."

"What! And me below? What was it? Did I fall asleep, or what? Lord! but it's an old man I must be getting. I wouldn't've believed it. In all my time to sea, that's the first time ever I warn't able to lift hand to tayckles and my own dory hoisting in."

But a really strong man recuperates rapidly. Half an hour later Martin was enjoying a fine hot supper, while the crew sat around and hove questions at him. They asked for details, and he gave them, or at least such of them as had become impressed on his mind; particularly did he condemn, in crisp phrases, the botheration of boots that leaked and the need of a second plug-strap on the bottom of a dory. "There ought to be a new law about plug-straps," said Martin.

"Did ever a man yet come off the bottom of a dory and not speak about the plug-straps?" commented one.

"And leaky boots *is* the devil," affirmed another—a notorious talker this one, who bunked up in the peak, where he could be dimly seen now, his head out of his bunk that his voice might carry the better. "I bought a pair of boots in Boston once—a Jew up on Atlantic Avenue——"

"In Heaven's name, will you shut up, you and your Atlantic Avenue boots? We'll never hear the end of those boots."

The man in the peak subsided, and he who had quelled him, near to the stove and smoking a pipe, went on for himself: "And what were you thinkin' of, Martin, when you thought you were goin'?"

"Or did you think any time that you was goin'?" asked somebody else.

"Indeed and I did, and a dozen times I thought it—and that 'twas a blessed cold kind of a day for a man to be soaking his feet in the ocean."

"And yet"—the lad in the peak was in commission again—"and yet warn't it some professor said in that book that somebody was reading out of the other day—warn't it him said that salt water ain't nigh so cold as fresh. Is it, Martin?"

"As to that," answered Martin, "I dunno. But I wish 'twas that professor's feet, not mine, was astraddle the bottom of that dory—not to wish him any harm. But a winter's day and the wind no'therly, I found it cold enough."

"I went into a Turkish bath parlor in New York one time," came the conversational voice from the peak, "and hot? My Lord——"

"The man," said the next on watch, taking his mitts from the line above the stove—"the man that'd talk about hot Turkish baths on a night like this to sea—Turkish baths, and, Lord in heaven, two good long hours up there——" He halted to take a sniff up the companion-way. "Two hours—what ought to be done with the like o' him?"

The man by the stove, who a while before had vanquished the lad in the peak, took his pipe long enough from his mouth to observe, "And for four years now, to my knowledge, he's been tryin' to tell how hot 'twas in that Turkish bath."

"Hit him with a gob-stick," suggested the cook—"or this rolling-pin." He was flattening out pie-crust.

"A gob-stick or a rolling-pin," said the next on watch, "is too good for him. Here, take this," and passed the cook's hatchet along the lockers.

The opening and closing of the hatch after the watch had gone on deck admitted a blast of air that made the man in the bunk nearest the ladder draw up his legs. The flame in the lamp flared, whereat the original inquirer got up to set the lamp chimney more firmly over the base of the burner, and before he sat down put the question again. How did Martin feel when he thought he was sure enough going. "The last fifteen or twenty minutes or so I bet you did some thinkin'—didn't you, Martin?"

"A little," admitted Martin, and with a long arm gaffed another potato. "Lord, but these apple dumplings are great stuff, aren't they? You don't want to let any of those dumplings get past you, Johnnie. Never mind how used-up you feel, come out of your bunk and try 'em. Five or six good plump dumplings inside of you and you'll forget you ever saw a dory."

"He's asleep, Martin."

"Is he? Well, maybe 'tis just as well. 'Twas a hard drag for the poor boy to-day."

After two or three had told how they felt when they were on the bottom of a dory, one said: "Martin, but you must've had some close calls in your time?"

"My share—no more." He was taking a look around the table as he spoke—a lingering, regretful look—and then he gave up any further thought of it. "Ah-h," he sighed, "but I cert'nly took the good out of that meal," and leaning against the nearest bunk-board—his own—drew out his pipe from beneath the mattress. "My share and no more," he repeated, and reached across to the shelf in his bunk and drew forth a plug of tobacco. He cut off the proper quantity and rolled it around between his palms the proper length of time before he spoke again. With the pipe between his teeth he had to speak more slowly. "Any man that's been thirty years trawling will nat'rally have a few things happen to him. To-day makes the third time I've been on the bottom of a dory, and cold weather each time—just my blessed luck—cold weather each time"—three times he blew through the stem of his pipe—"and I don't want to be there the fourth. Eddie-boy, hand me a wisp out o' the broom at your elbow."

While Martin was cleaning out his pipe somebody put the question generally. Would they rather be on the bottom of a dory out to sea, or on a vessel piled up on the rocky shore somewhere?

"On the rocks for me."

"And for me."

"Yes, a chance to get ashore from a wreck, but the bottom of a dory with the sea breaking over you, and it cold maybe—cert'nly it's never any too warm—wr-r-h!"

There seemed to be no doubt of what they would take for their choice. "And yet," commented Martin, when the last word had been said, "I dunno but the closest call ever I had was when the *Oliver Cromwell* went ashore and was lost off Whitehead."

"Cripes, but I'm glad I warn't on her. A bad business that—a bad business. Hand me that plate, will you, Martin?"—this from the cook.

"Sure, boy—here y'are—an armful of plates. Cook on a fisherman's the last job I'd want—you're never done. And you're right it was a bad business, cook. When you've seen nineteen men washed over one after the other, every man—every man but one, that is—putting up the divil's own fight for his life before he went—I dunno but what it must be worse than going down at sea all together, all hands in one second, with no chance at all—though that must be hard enough, too."

Silence for a while, and then Martin continued: "If I had it to do over again"—two long puffs—"to do it over and be lost instead of saved, I dunno but what I'd rather founder at sea myself. Nineteen men lost—eighteen good men—Lord, but 'twas cruel!"

Martin, with his head back, was gazing thoughtfully up at the deck-beams. A gentle leading question, and he resumed.

"We left Gloucester that trip with the Skipper's—— But to tell that story right a man ought to begin away back. But will you give me a match, somebody?"

He lit up again, and then settled himself snugly between the edge of the table and his bunk-board, after the manner of a man who is in for a long sitting-out. Once he really started there were but few interruptions. The loss of the *Cromwell* was a serious affair, and nobody broke in thoughtlessly; and only when Martin would stop to refill his pipe, or to light up again when he found he had let it go out, did he make any halt himself.

What the Hoodleys of Cape Ann were, and are still (began Martin), of course all of you, or most all of you, anyway, know. Or maybe some of you don't know. Well, they were a hard crowd—but didn't know it—the kind of people that whenever they got to talkin' about their own kind, never had any tales to prove maybe that there was even the lightest bit of wit or grace or beauty among them; no, none of that for the Hoodleys of Cape Ann. But to show you what thrifty, hard-headed forehanded people they come of, they could spin off, any of 'em, a hundred little yarns almost any day, as if anybody on earth that knew those of them that were alive would ever doubt what the dead-and-gone ones must've been.

Hard they were—even neighbors that didn't take life as a dream of poetry said that much of them. Hard they were—man, yes—the kind that little children never toddled up to and climbed on to their knees, nor a man in hard luck by any mistake ever asked the loan of a dollar of—the kind that never a man walked across the street to shake hands with. Take 'em full and by, the Hoodleys were about as hard a tribe as you'd find in all Essex County—surely 'tisn't possible there were any harder. And yet you couldn't pick a flaw in 'em before the law. They were honest. Everybody had to say that for them—paying their debts, their just debts—as they put it themselves—and collecting their own dues, don't fear, and a great respect for the letter of the law—for the letter of it.

I mind they used to boast that for generations their people had kept clear of the poor-houses, and that all had been church-members in good standing. Well, not exactly all; for, to be exact and truthful—they themselves used to put it that way—there was one here and there that had broken away. But such had been rare, as one of them—a strong church-member—used to put it, and the devil is ever active; and speaking of the devil, this particular member'd go on, there is always the blistering pit for the unrighteous. That last I s'pose he thought he ought to put in, because everybody knew that of all the people that fell from grace, the wickedest, the most blasphemous, the most evil of all evil livers had been those of the Hoodleys that had backslided. Once they went to the bad they cert'nly went beyond all hope; and nobody did they curse out more furiously than their own people every time they did start in.

Well, the Hoodleys weren't a seafaring people originally. They moved over to Gloucester, y'see, at one particular time when everybody was expecting in some way to make money out of fishing. George Hoodley was a lad then—seventeen—with the hard kind of a face and the awkward body that everybody nat'rally looked for in one of his breed. And he had the kind of a mind, I cal'late, that his father would like a boy of his to have. Well, George signed right away for a boy's wages with a prudent master—old Sol Tucker it was—that went in the *Distant Shore* so long. They used to say that Sol wore the same pair of jack-boots out of her that he had when he first went aboard, and there was eighteen years between his first and last trips in her. I mind the jack-boots—and they were cert'nly well patched when I saw them—though no more than twelve year old then. That'll give you an idea of Sol.

George Hoodley put in thirteen years with Sol, and thirteen long hard drags of years they must've been. I misdoubt that any of us here could've stood those thirteen—no, sir, not for vessel's, skipper's, and hand's share together. Well, George stood it, and I don't b'lieve he ever knew he was missing anything in life. But he had something to show for it, as he'd say himself. When he left old Sol he was able to buy a half interest and go master of a good vessel. I went with him in her—the *Harding*—two trips—just two, no more."

Martin halted to light up again, and somebody asked, "Warn't it the *Harding*, Martin, that had the small cabin?"

The smallest (answered Martin) that ever was seen in a fisherman. Just about room to stand between the steps and the stove and between the stove and the bulkhead again; and not much better for'ard—a fore'c's'le so small that the crew used to say they had to go on deck to haul on their oilskins. She was all hold. Well, while he was in the *Harding* George made a great reputation for all kinds of carefulness. Most men that went with him said he was altogether too careful for any mortal use; and maybe that was so. But his savings kept piling up, and there was plenty of other careful men to ship with him and abide by him.

One thing that George and his people used to boast about was that he warn't like a good many other fishermen. While a good many of them were putting in time ashore drinking, skylarking, or if it warn't no more than to spend a quiet sociable evening with their friends or their own families—during all that George was attending to business, for business it was to him. He was talking one day of those who said fishing was a venture, or even adventure, and he'd been reading somewhere, he said, of the joy that somebody thought fine, strong men ought to get out of fishing. He almost smiled when he was telling it. The joy of fishing! If you had a good trip of fish and got a good price for it, why, yes, fishing was good fun then. But as far as he could see it was like any other kind of work. You put in about so much time at it and took good care of your money, and at the end of the year you had about so much to show for it. And as for the fun of fighting a breeze of wind that some of them talked about, seeing how long you could hang on to your canvas without losing your spars, or how far down you could let your vessel roll before she'd capsize—none of that for him.

And it was all rot, their pretending they got any fun out of it. They had the same blood and nerve and senses as any other humans, and he knew that for himself he was content to stay hove-to when it blew one of the living gales they talked about, and satisfied, too, to shorten sail in time, even if he was bound home, when it blew hard enough. Gloucester would be there when he got there—it wouldn't blow away. Cert'nly, he'd admit, the drivers'd outsail him on a passage and beat him out of the market once in a while; but in the long run his way paid best. He could name the foolish fellows that'd been lost, and the fingers of both hands wouldn't begin to name them. Yes, and left families to starve, some of 'em. And he himself was alive and still bringing home the fish, and everybody in Gloucester knew what he had to show for it.

Well, by that time everybody in Gloucester did know what he had to show for it, and everybody in Gloucester said it was about time he began to look around for a wife, though nobody expected George Hoodley to look around for a wife after the regular manner of fishermen, who don't look around at all, so far as I c'n see. We, or most of us, anyway, liking the girl pretty well and she willing, gen'rally hurry up to get married 'bout as soon as we find ourselves with a couple of months' rent ahead.

But not that way with George Hoodley. It wasn't until he was forty-five that he began to look around after the manner of his people for a wife. There was to be no rushing into the expenses of matrimony; but with two good vessels, and a house all clear, a man might well think of it—or leastways I imagine that's the way he thought it out, if he wasted any time thinking of it at all.

Now, if George Hoodley had not been like other men during all the years he was fishing, if he hadn't joined in the talk of his mates on what was worth having in life—you know how fishermen gen'rally talk when they get going on some things—even if George Hoodley pretended to think that he thought they were a lot of blessed fools, yet it is more than likely that the opinions of the men he went to sea with had their influence with him just the same. It stands to reason they were bound to, after years of it. And then, clear back he must've come of flesh-and-blood people, like anybody else. For, though nobody could imagine the Hoodleys having weaknesses like other people, yet cert'nly, if you went far enough back, there must've been ancestors among 'em all—one or two—that enjoyed life the same as other people.

Well, for a wife George took a very pretty girl who was young enough—some of you that know her know that well—young enough to 've had grandchildren to him. Twenty or twenty-one, and a trim figure. She didn't have the looks I'd pick for myself, but most everybody agreed she was pretty. She had never been so far away from home that she could not be back again the same day—and that certified to her character with some people. For other things, she would come into some money when her father died. And her father didn't object to George Hoodley. He was a thrifty man, too, and said all right—made George's way easy, in fact.

Now, I cal'late that George thought that he never did a wiser thing in all his life than when he married that girl. Among the men he knew there were some that'd got pretty wives, but no money; and others money, but plain-lookers. He was getting both, good looks and money, and he could laugh at them all—those who wanted her because of the money in prospect or those others who were in love with her face. And maybe he didn't laugh at some of 'em!—the sail-carriers and others who imagined that a reputation for foolishness at sea won women's hearts. It was a great stroke of business altogether. He would get his share of good living yet—he boasted of that. He had always taken the best care of himself—never drank and seldom smoked, and then only in the way of business—was in the prime of life, had a tough constitution, and his wife-to-be was young and pretty. He could laugh at all of them.

Nearly everybody in Gloucester said nice things to George. "My, but you're the deep one—and lucky? Oh, no, you're not a bit lucky! But you always did have a long head——" That's the way most people talked to him, and he liked it. As for the few who didn't seem pleased—the three or four who hinted, but didn't ask outright if he thought he was doing a wise thing—George said it was easy enough to place them—they'd like to get her themselves. If he was only another kind of a man he might have been warned in time, but he was that kind that nobody felt sorry for. And that's a hard thing, too.

Well, they were married, and the wonderful thing happened of George letting his vessel go out a trip without him. Yes, sir, she went to sea the day he was married. He stayed ashore that trip, but not the second.

The truth was, they didn't get along well together; which warn't remarkable, maybe—she young and pretty, and he the age he was and more than looking it. Forty-seven's a fine age for some men, but not for George's kind. Leather-skinned he was, with lean chops of jaws, a mouth as tight as a deck seam, a turkey neck and eyes that were cold as a dead haddock's.

George, I cal'late, was beginning to learn that a woman was a different proposition from a vessel, and that there were things about a woman that had to be studied out. Not that I think he tried overhard to study this one out. Listening to him as I had many a time before he got married, I knew that he figured that a woman, like everything else, had her place in the universe, and she ought to know it, or be made to know it. And now here was his wife's case: a steady man for a husband, a good house to live in, grub and her clothes all found, or, anyway, as much clothes as he thought fit and proper for her to have. Could a woman expect more, or a man do more, than that?

'Twarn't long after he got married that things began to go wrong, not only at home but out to sea. There was the trip he broke his ankle. Coming home, he looked maybe for a little show of grief on the part of his wife, but, if he did, he didn't find it. Indeed, she even said he ought to go to a hospital instead of making it hard for her at home. 'Twas common talk she said that.

Going out his next trip, with his leg not yet well-knit and himself having to limp out the door, he and his wife had words. Billie Shaw, passing by, heard them. "I don't care if I never see you again," he said.

"And if you think I'd care if I never saw you again, either, you're mistaken," she said. "I wouldn't care if you're lost—you and your vessel. Only I wouldn't like to see all the crew lost."

That last must have set him to thinking, for he didn't sail that day, as he said he would, but put in a day talking to people around town. I know he asked me, for one, a lot of questions. I didn't know till later what he was driving at. 'Twas while he was questioning me that he coaxed me into shipping with him. "Just this trip, Martin," he said. "And your cousin Dan Spring's thinking of coming out with me this time, to help me out. Two men left me suddenly to-day, and if you'll come out Dan'll surely come." And so out of good-nature I said I'd go with him. It's blessed little he got out of me, though, in answer to his other questions, but he found plenty of others willing to talk.

Well, on the passage out we all noticed he seemed an absent-minded man. That trip—it was a queer one from the first. With myself and my cousin, Dan Spring, who were dory-mates, it warn't nothing but accidents. There was that after the first haul of fish when we were dropping down to come alongside. It was a bit rough, that's a fact. Some said that for so careful a man it was surprising that the Skipper had ordered the dories out at all that day. However, we were just ahead of her—under the end of her bowsprit almost—and of course Dan and myself nat'rally looked for the Skipper to look out for us. We were so near that Dan had taken in his oars and had the painter ready to heave aboard. I was at the oars. One stroke more, I thought, and we'll be all right, when whing! the first thing we knew around came the vessel and down on us. I couldn't do anything with the dory, she being down to her gunnels with fish. Well, Dan had time to holler to me, and I hollered to him—no more than that—when she was on us. By a miracle, you might say, we both managed to grab the bob-stay. The stem of the vessel cut the dory like it was a cracker, and then under her keel it went.

Not knowing what to make of it all, we climbed aboard over the bow. Our faces were no more than above the knightheads than the Skipper yelled. We ran aft and asked him what was wrong. He stared at us for a second as if he couldn't understand.

"What's it?" I asked.

"Why, I thought you two were gone."

"And so we were, for all of you. A man that's been to sea as long as you, George Hoodley," I said, "and put a wheel the wrong way! Nobody ever said you were the cleverest man out of Gloucester to handle a vessel, but cert'nly you know down wheel from up."

"Martin," he said, "I give you my word. Just as I grabbed the wheel that time a sea came aboard, the vessel lurched, and my foot slipped on the wet deck, and I lost my grip of the wheel."

Well, our dory was gone, but later in the trip one of the crew, Bill Thornton, was troubled with a felon on his finger. 'Twarn't anything very bad, and Bill himself said it didn't amount to anything, but the Skipper thought Bill'd better stay aboard, and his dory-mate with him. "And Martin, you and Dan take his dory," says the Skipper—"you two being so used to each other it'll be the best way."

Well, that was all right. We took their dory and gear and went out the next set—only two days after our own dory had been lost, mind you. Well, this time we got lost in the fog and were out overnight. It turned out a snowy night, and cold, with fog again in the morning. That morning, so we heard from the crew later, the Skipper said, after a little jogging about, "They must be gone; we may as well give 'em up." Everybody else aboard thought there was a good chance for us yet, and one or two hinted at that. But he wouldn't have it. "Run her westerly," he said, and went below.

Well, to everybody's surprise we popped up just then almost under her bow. 'Twas quite a little sea on at the time, but the man at the wheel this time didn't let his foot slip on the wet deck and lose his grip of the wheel. He jibed her over in time and we climbed aboard. One man ran down to call the Skipper and tell him the good news, but the Skipper looked at him as if he didn't think it was good news.

They expected to have two or three more days of fishing aboard the *Cromwell* after that day, but I made a kick. Never again would I haul a trawl for a skipper of his kind, I said.

"What?" asked the Skipper. "You mean to mutinize on me?"

"Call it mutiny or what you please," said I, "but myself and Dan don't leave this vessel again in a dory."

"Don't you know I can run into the nearest port, Newf'und-land or Nova Scotia, and put you ashore?"

"I do."

"Or take you both back to Gloucester and have you up before the court?"

"You can put us up before forty courts—the highest in the land, if you want—and maybe they'll sentence us to ten years in jail, or to be strung up to a yard-arm somewheres. But I don't cal'late they will—I don't cal'late so—not after we tell our story. It's a fine thing fishermen have come to when their own skippers try to lose 'em."

"Lose you? Me try to lose you? And why would I try to lose you?"

"Lord knows. But you do, and there's an end of it. Dan and I don't swing any dory over the rail of this vessel this trip again."

He said nothing to that. Only he looked at me, then a long look at Dan, and turned into his bunk again. Later in the day he drew out a bottle of whiskey and began to drink. That was a new thing to his crew that knew him so long. They'd pretty good reason to believe that he'd kept a bottle in his closet under lock and key for a little drink on the quiet when the dories were out and nobody by; but they knew he did it slyly so as not to have the name of it, or maybe so's not to have to ask anybody to join him, and so save expense. But everybody knew that whatever liquor he took that way was not enough to hurt him. Yes, a sober man he'd always been—everybody had to say that for him. But now he was drinking with all hands looking on, taking it down in gulps, and when the first quart was gone he brought out another, drinking by himself all the time.

However, he warn't drunk by a good deal when in the middle of the night he ordered all hands on deck to make sail. The men thought he was crazy; but he was the skipper. If anything happened, 'twas his lookout, not theirs. So they gave her the full mains'l, and then he ordered the man at the wheel to swing her off.

"Yes, sir, and what course?"

"What course? Didn't I say to swing her off? Put her fair before it. Jibe over your fores'l and let her run—let her run, I tell you! Whichever way she goes, let her run."

And we let her run all that night and all next day. She was under her winter rig—in March it was—no topm'sts; but the four lower sails alone were enough for any Gloucester fisherman that second night. I mind 'twas nine o'clock that night, and Abner Tucker's watch. A staid, sober man was Abner. He'd been to sea for twenty years, and been with George for ten years—stayed with him because he knew him for a prudent man, I s'pose. Well, Abner took the wheel, and getting the feel of it, cried out, "Lord in heaven, it's like trying to steer two vessels—she's running wild!" and braced himself against the wheel, but warn't braced firm enough, or he warn't strong enough, for he let her broach, and a sea swept her quarter, burying him and the vessel both. Over the top of the house went that sea and down into the cabin by the ton. They were floated out in the cabin and came tumbling up on deck. Josh Whitaker, a bait knife in his hand, jumped to the main peak halyards.

The Skipper noticed him. "What you goin' to do?"

"Cut the halyards and let the mains'l run," says Josh.

"You cut, and I'll cut you!" The Skipper, too, had a bait-knife, and he lunged with it for Josh. Then he stood guard by the halyards. "If anybody else thinks to cut"—and we saw the rest of it in his face—dark as it was, we saw that.

The Skipper was still on guard there when Dan and myself came on deck for our watch. That was eleven o'clock. Dan went for'ard to look out and I took the wheel from Abner, and glad enough he was to turn the wheel over when he gave me the course. I looked in the binnacle to make sure he had it right.

"Still on that course?" I asked, when I'd seen 'twas so. "Where's the Skipper?"

"Here," said the Skipper himself from between the house and the weather rail, where he was still watching that nobody bothered the halyards, I s'pose. "What do you want?"

"How about the course?" I asked.

"What's wrong with the course?"

"No'west by west half west—is it right?"

"No'west by west half west, or whatever it is—yes. And why not?"

"Nothin', if you say it's right."

"And why ain't it right? Why not? Why don't you spit it out? What's wrong with the course?"

"What's wrong?" I said. "Don't you know we warn't much more than three hundred miles off shore when we swung her off last night, and we've been coming along now for twenty-three hours—and the clip she's been coming!"

He said nothing to that for a while, and then it was, "And so you don't think the course is right?"

"No, I don't—not if you're intending to make Gloucester."

"That so? Not if I was intending to make Gloucester? And where in the name o' heaven am I headin' for if not Gloucester?"

"Where? Where? Damned if I know," says I. "Hell, maybe."

"That so? Well, Gloucester or hell, drive her you."

"Oh, I'll drive her." I threw it back in his teeth that way, spat to looard, took a fresh hold of the wheel, and did drive her just to let him know he couldn't scare me. Cripes, but I gave her all she wanted!

It was wicked, though, the way she was going. She warn't a big sailer, the *Cromwell*—George Hoodley never did believe in the racing kind—but any old plug could've sailed that night. Along toward midnight it got thick o' snow, I mind, and we came near running into a vessel hove-to under a fores'l. "Hear what he hollered?" Dan for'ard called out, as we shot by her.

"What was it he hollered?" asked the Skipper.

"Something about where we're bound for," answered Dan.

"That so? What's it of his business?" He went below and from the wheel I could see him taking another drink under the cabin light. He had got to where he wasn't bothering to pour it into a mug, but took it straight from the bottle—long pulls, too. He came on deck again just as my watch and Dan's was up. To Charlie Feeney, who was next man to the wheel, I said that the Skipper ought to be spoken to about hauling her up. So Charlie did.

"Who in the devil's name is skipper of this vessel, anyway?" was all the answer he got.

Henry Carsick, who was Charlie's dory-mate, said he didn't know what to make of it. "I'm blessed if ever I knew him to carry half this sail in a breeze before, and I've been with him three years," said he to me as he went for'ard.

Well, Dan and me hadn't more than got off our oilskins after standing watch, when a hail came from Henry on watch for'ard. "Some kind of a roaring ahead of us," repeated Charlie from the wheel. And just then it was that, leaping like a hound, she hit something good and hard—a check, a grinding along her bottom, a rearing of her bow. But nothing small was going to stop her the clip she was going then, and whatever it was, she was clear of it. By that time the whole crew was tumbling up on deck. "What is it? What she strike?" they called out one to another. Another leap of her, and it was clear white astern and on either side. "A wall of rock ahead!" yelled Henry Carsick, and came tumbling aft—"a ledge of solid rock, Skipper!"

"Yes," said the Skipper, in a kind of studyin' tone—"and it *was* hell or Gloucester, warn't it"—he turned to me. "I said it'd be, didn't I?"

"That's what you did," said I, "and it ain't Gloucester. You ought to be proud of yourself—nineteen men, maybe, lost for you—nineteen men. I'm not counting yourself—you ought to be lost. Will we put a dory over?"

"Put one over, if you want to. Put 'em all over if it will make you feel better. Do what you please. I'm done with this vessel—I'm done with fishing."

"I guess that's right," says I. "And I guess you're not th' only one that gets through with fishing to-night." Then I turned to the crew: "What d'y' say if we try and get a dory over and see what's around us?"

They said all right, and we unhooked the tayckles. A few heaves, and up went the dory into the air. It hung there for a second or two. We tried to push it over, but the wind took it, tore it from us and dropped it into the sea. The sea took it, tossed it up and back against the rail and on to the deck. One smash—another—another—and it was kindling-wood.

"Try another," said Dan, who was standing by the rail to his waist in water. He had a line about his waist, and that was all kept him inboard. We hoisted another dory out of the nest, and we had to fight, even as we were hoisting, for a footing on her deck, it was that steep and the great seas running clean over her. Up into the air we hoisted the second dory—

up and out again. Once more the howling wind and the boiling sea took it—once more 'twas kindling-wood.

"There's seven more left—try another," said Dan. A great man, Dan. If I go to sea for forty years I never expect to see a better—I could 'most cry when I think of how he was lost that night.

"One of my hands is mashed to a pulp," said somebody.

"I'm sorry, boy, but we can't stop to doctor you," I called to him. "Let somebody take your place at the tayckles. Now then, lads. I don't know that it'll do any good when we do get it over, but maybe we c'n take a look around—maybe find a landing-place somewheres."

"I'll go in her," calls out someone. "Give me a chance now——"

"My chance," said Dan—"my chance, ain't it, Martin?"

"Yes," says I to Dan, and looking back at it now I say, "God forgive you, Martin Carr," and yet 'twarn't no fault of mine.

Out went the dory, and when she hung for a second Dan swung himself after it. He made it, and called, "Pay out that line!" and dug in with the oars. We could just see him. We were still paying out the line, we could still hear his voice, when "Haul in! I broke an oar!" he called.

When we went to haul in there was nothing to haul—the line had parted.

"God, he's gone!" said somebody.

"That's what he is," said a voice beside me—"I was bound he would be."

'Twas the Skipper. From by the rail he crept up to me with a knife-blade shining—a bait-knife it was, the same he'd had all night. And then I knew what it meant—he had cut the line. I stood away from him first, then I grabbed him and picked him up, and had a mind to heave him over the rail, and then—I don't know why—I didn't. I dropped him on the deck. "You'll get yours before this night's over," I said.

"A devil of a lot I care," he said.

The rest of them, or at least those that warn't too busy with the next dory or trying to look out for themselves, called out to ask what was wrong with the two of us. I didn't answer, nor did the Skipper.

We kept trying to launch dories—trying, but losing them—smashed to kindling-wood they were, until the whole nine of them were gone. During that time four men were washed over.

One, with a line about him, made a desperate try, but was hauled back dead, I mind. We laid his body on the house, and afterward, when I went to look for it, it was gone—swept over. The seas were wicked.

The wind was blowing harder, the big combers were coming even higher, and the gang began to be washed off her deck and lost one after the other. We took to the rigging when we saw 'twarn't any more use on deck. And in the middle of it all, what d'y' think the Skipper did? What d'y' think he did, the man that was the cause of it all? Well, while his crew were going—to Heaven or hell, as it might be—washed over and lost, one after the other—he goes below and has a mug-up for himself. Yes, sir, goes into the forec's'le and has a mug of coffee and a piece of pie. Somebody that'd seen him going below called out to the rest of us. The Lord's truth, that. And the rest of us blasphemed to God, we were that black with rage against him.

Well, there was ten of us, I think, in the rigging, all hoping to be able to last until daylight, when we thought we might be able to see where we were. Hoping only—'twas not expecting—for 'twas getting colder, with the spray beginning to freeze where it struck and making hard work of holding on to the rigging. 'Twas wild—her sails still up, with the reef points beating a devil's tattoo where the canvas warn't tearing up and flying out like long-tailed, ghostly things in the blackness. Lashed to the rigging we must've been for all of two hours, I cal'late. Some began to take note of the numbness creeping over them—one or two—the most discouraged. The warmer-blooded, or the strongest, tried to keep up a cheering talk—tried to crack jokes and one thing or another.

Well, we had hope, some of us, of lasting through the night, when crack! We knew what was coming then. I slipped the half-hitch that had been holding me to the shrouds and climbed higher. I was 'most to the mast-head, clear of the gaff, when over the side went her forem'st, half a dozen men clinging to the forerigging, a-swaying and shaking; and after it went the mainm'st, with four more, I think, in her rigging.

Well, sir, when the forem'st went I was thrown into clear water. I had plenty of line to my hand, with a turn of it around the mast-head, and with that I hauled myself back. I hung on to an arm of the cross-trees for a while there before I started to work my way back along the mast toward the vessel. I didn't believe then I'd ever live to reach the vessel. The sail, as I said, had been kept standing on her, and now it was lying flat on the water, now sagging down with the weight of the water over it, and now bellying into the air when a great sea would get under it. I saw a shadow of a man—hanging on to a reef point he was—go down with that sail once, then go up with it once, and then the sail split under the weight of the sea, and I never saw him again. But I heard him holler as he went. What he said I don't know—I had to keep on crawling. The hoops of the sail were around the mast, of course, and I used them and the bolt-rope of the fores'l where the sail was torn away to pull myself along. And, mind you, I had to watch out for the forem'st itself. It reared and tossed with one sea after another—me astride it most of the time—like a man on horseback, though hard riding enough I found it. The least little tap of that, and I knew where I'd be—bait for the fishes that I'd baited for so often. Well, between the hoops and the bolt-rope and the rigging I hauled myself along. And the way that mast rolled! Forty times I swear I thought I was good as dead. But no. And so I dragged myself along, watching out when I went upon the crests and holding my breath when I was pulled down into the depths—hung on desperately, mindful that the quietest knock of that big spar would end me then and there, and mindful, too, that once my grip loosed I'd be swallowed up in the roaring. Tired I was, aye, and weak, but I kept on working toward the vessel's hull always.

Against the white sails and white foam I made out two others struggling like myself. "That you, Bill?" said one. "Yes—that you, Mike?" I heard from the other. I knew who they were then, and called out myself. Between two seas one slipped from sight. The other still crept on. "That you, Bill?" I called out. "Bill's gone," said the voice. 'Twas Mike Cannon. "That's tough," I said. "It is that," says Mike, "after the fight he put up. But how're you making out yourself?" "Pretty good; how're you?" I said. "Kind of tired. I doubt if I'll hold out much longer—something smashed inside my oilskins. My chest and a few ribs, I think—and one arm, too. A wild night and tough going, Martin."

There was no more chance to talk. Two awful seas followed, and after the second a quiet spell—the back suction. I looked around. I thought I saw Mike, but warn't sure. I guess now I didn't, for another sea, the biggest of all, tossed the whole lot of wreckage back against the hull of the *Cromwell*. There was a grinding and a battering as the spars met the hull. Myself up in the air, I looked down and found myself over her deck, and then—my guardian angel it must've been that whispered me then—I let go. "God in Heaven!" I found myself saying, and fetched up on her deck, the luckiest man in all the North Atlantic.

Against what was left of the rail I found myself, close to what was left of the forerigging. At first I warn't sure just where I was at all, but that's where I found myself when my eyes were clear to see again. And when my eyes were clear I looked around. The hull of her was heaving to every sea, moving inshore maybe a foot at a time, with her bowsprit pointing to a shadow of rock or cliff ahead. I looked around again, and, so far as I could make out, everything—house, gurry-kids, booby-hatches, everything—was gone off her. Only the two stumps of her masts seemed to be left on deck. But, no—the forec's'le hatch was left. Her bow, being so much higher than her stern, saved that. Toward the forec's'le I crawled, I don't know why. The hatch cover was closed. I slid it back. Down the ladder I went, and when I was below—I don't know why, either—I thought of the razors in my bunk. I might's well get them couple of razors, I says to myself, and starts for my bunk, which was in the peak—the same bunk, clear for'ard on the starb'd side, that the Turkish-bath lad is in now. 'Twas like swimming down there. The water by the butt of the forem'st, 'bout like where I'm sitting here to-night, was over my waist. I couldn't help thinking then how deep 'twas, and getting deeper fast, with the seas pouring down the hatchway that I'd forgot to close behind me. I was thinking of that—thinking I ought to've closed the hatches after me—and was looking back toward the ladder, when I heard a little noise, or thought I did, for the pounding of the seas overhead was making an awful racket and I warn't sure. But I heard it again, the clinking of crockery like, and I looked around—back behind the steps—at last, and there, behind the stove, leaning up against the cook's lockers—I'd clean forgot him—was the Skipper. He was having another mug-up for himself.

"God!" I said, "you here?"

He half-turned, dropping a coffee mug he had in his hand. Then taking a second look: "Man, but I thought it was the ghost of Dan Spring. But you two look something alike. Come to think, you're cousins, ain't you? Man, if you could only see yourself! Blood, blood, and bruises—and your eyes, man—your eyes! But have a mug of coffee. Warn't it lucky? here's the coffee-boiler hove up here on the lockers, and some coffee still left in it—and hot. And there's a pie in the grub locker—on the top shelf. If it'd been on the bottom shelf it'd be all wet and floating around. Ain't that luck? And look here—a good half pint of whiskey left yet! It's been an awful night, ain't it? What d'y' say?"

He held the bottle toward me. I took it from him and smashed it on the stove. And then I gave him a bit of my mind. "And so, George Hoodley, you're so afraid, after all, to go to your death that you must go drunk, hah? The soul that the Lord gave you—that soul is going from a drunken body straight to the God that's going to judge you. And how'll you be judged, d'y' think, for this night's work, George Hoodley? Could you listen to what was said on deck to-night and not die of fright at what you've done? Did you hear Sam Catiss? 'I'm not afraid to go, if go I must,' says Sam, 'but, Lord, there's one or two things I wish I hadn't done,' says Sam. You heard him—we all heard him—and then he was swept over. And but for you, George Hoodley, maybe he'd have had time to make his peace before he went. And up in the rigging—you warn't there, I know—even you, if you'd heard what Peter Harkins said when we all knew her spars were going—when Peter heard the first crack and knew what it meant—and knowing he was going, with his last free breath he said things of you that if I had an enemy I wouldn't want him to hear—not if I hated him bad enough to want to see him in the bottom of the deepest, hottest hold of hell——"

"Hell!" he breaks in—"there ain't no hell—nor Heaven, nor God, nor anything."

"God forgive you for that! You——"

"God forgive me? Martin, you talk like an old woman. I tell you, since I was no higher than one of my jack-boots I've been listening to talk of hell and Heaven—mostly hell, though—and I used to believe it one time. Nobody believed it any more than I did till when—till I began to see that the very people that was talking it so hard warn't governed by what they said. What they wanted was everybody else to be governed by what they preached. I tell you I know. I've seen it in my own people—I know them better than you do. It's years now—

I was one of the fools, one that never let anybody, I thought, get the best of me at anything. You're one—though you're a good man in your fool way, Martin. I had no grudge against you, not even when I tried to lose you in the dory. But I had to get rid of your dory-mate."

"Get rid of Dan? And why Dan?"

"Why? There again! You mean to tell me you don't know? . . . I looked around before I went out this trip. Nobody'd tell me, but I knew his first name was Dan—Dan something. One day, when the crew was out hauling the trawls, I rummaged his bunk and found part of a letter in my wife's writing under his mattress. That was the same day I ran over Dan and you in the dory."

"Wait a bit—wait a bit. How do you know it was this Dan? Are there no other Dans in Gloucester?"

"How do I know? And it in his bunk—under the mattress in his bunk."

"That's all right. And whose bunk was it before Dan Spring got it? Another Dan's, warn't it—Dan Powell's? And didn't he leave the mattress behind him when he left this vessel, trip before last? Didn't he? And warn't Dan Powell just the kind of a man that'd do a thing like that, and not Dan Spring? And so nineteen souls are gone because you thought—just thought only—that one of them was fooling you. And for a woman that warn't worth Dan Spring's little finger. That's the truth, George Hoodley. But if you'd been brought up different, if you'd studied to understand the good side of people, instead of the other side, how to get the best of them and to make money out of them and save it, you both might've come safe out of it. But you warn't that kind. 'Twarn't in your blood, nor in none of your people. Wrong's wrong—I got nothing to say about that—but human nature's human nature. Why should you expect, George Hoodley, to get the fine things in life? Why warn't you content with money? You'd earned that. What had you to offer a handsome young woman that liked a good time? What had you, even supposing she was the kind you could trust—anything that women love? Not a blessed thing. You've spent your life with about one idea in your head, and that idea had nothing to do with being pleasant or kind to others, or good to anybody but yourself. Miles away from the kind of thing that women love were you all the time. You come to nigh fifty year of age—you, with your hard face and hard mouth, and eyes like—God! like a dead fish's eyes to-night, no less—don't you know that whoever was going to marry you warn't going to for love? You had a right to marry some lean old sour-mouthed spinster with a little money like yourself. What made you think that a good-looking young girl and love was for you? But even in marrying you thought to make a good bargain—and got fooled. And by the daughter of a man of your own kind, too. D'y' s'pose her father didn't know? God help you, George Hoodley, 'twas him hooked you—'twas him made the good bargain, not you. Why, before ever you married her 'twas common talk she warn't the girl for any man to trust. But what good is it to talk of that now? Nineteen men gone, for I don't count you—you're no man. You're a—— But I won't say it. Lord, but I'm tempted to choke you where you stand. Only when I think of those fine men—and poor Dan Spring——"

"Dan Spring? Don't tell me 'twarn't Dan Spring, the ——"

"Hold up," I says to that—"hold up, or close as we both are to death now and soon to go, I'll choke you where you stand—I'll send you to your God, or to the devil, with the print of my fingers around your turkey gobbler's throat, if you say evil of Dan. I knew him. Whatever faults he had—and maybe he had some—it warn't in the heart of Dan Spring to undervalue good women, or to mix with married women of any kind, let alone the wife of a man he was to go shipmates with. No, sir, not if he didn't have a wife and children of his own—wife and children that'll have to suffer all their lives because of you, and never know what brought it all about. Years from now they'll still be without food and clothing because of you. When I think of it, George Hoodley, I misdoubt they'd count it against me in the other world, where we'll both be soon with the others, if I was to take you by the throat and wind my fingers around your windpipe, and choke and choke and squeeze and squeeze you till your tongue came out and your eyes popped, and your face got blue and then black, and you——"

He drew back against the lockers and put his hands before his face. "Martin, Martin, don't!" he said; for, in truth, I all but had hold of him in spite of myself.

"I'm not going to," I said. "I have enough already to account for. There's two or three things I wish I hadn't done, and maybe if I sent you to death a few minutes sooner than you're going, I'd be sorry for it, too, later on. I'm going on deck now. This vessel won't last much longer. She's breaking as it is—and up to our chests in water here now."

Well, all the time we were below the big seas never let up. Some of her outside planks were working loose from their frames when I left him to go on deck again. Her deck planking, too, was coming apart. I almost fell into her hold when I was coming out of the forec's'le. I climbed up on toward her bow at last, hanging on where I could, dodging seas and the loose bits of wreck they were carrying with them. At the knight-heads I looked around and ahead. Astern and to either side 'twas nothing but rocks and the white sea beating over them. Ahead I could make out a wall of rock—I guessed where I was—to the west'ard of Canso, off Whitehead. I knew that coast, and a bad coast it was. Up on the bowsprit, crawling out with the help of the footropes and the stops hanging down and the wreck of the jib and stays, I began to think I had a chance—if I could only live till the daylight that was coming on. I climbed farther out. Hard work it was, and I soon cast off my boots. At the end of the bowsprit I got a better look. A dozen feet away was the ledge with a chance for a footing. If a man could jump that—but what man could, from a vessel's bowsprit? But now and then, perhaps every minute or so, the bowsprit, under a more than average big sea, lifted and sagged a little nearer the cliff. At the right time a man might make the leap, I thought. But if he missed? I looked down with the thought and saw nothing but rocks and a white boiling below. "If you miss, Martin," I said to myself, "maybe you'll live five seconds, maybe ten—but more likely maybe you'd keep clear of being mashed to jelly for just about a wink of your eye." And 'twas enough to make a man wink his eyes just to look at the white boiling hell beneath. I cast off my oilskin jacket while I was thinking of it, and then my oil pants. After that went my jersey, flannel shirt, and trousers. I meant to have a good try at it, anyway.

Looking back before I should leap, who did I see but the Skipper. In the noise of the sea I hadn't heard him, and he had cast off his boots and was unbuttoning his oilskins. He must've known I was watching him, for he said, "Don't throw me off, Martin—don't!"

"Who's going to?" I asked.

"That's right—don't. Give me a chance now, Martin."

"Like you gave your crew?"

"Oh, don't, Martin—don't! I was crazy. All that I said about not believing in God and hell, I didn't mean that. I'm afraid of it—afraid. I was always afraid of it, but never like now, Martin—never so afraid of the burning pit as now—never, never. Help me up, Martin—I'm weak—I can hardly stand. Help me, won't you, Martin? You're twice the man I am—no man ever sailed with me had your strength, Martin. Help me, won't you, Martin?"

I lifted him up, and the two of us clung to the end of the bowsprit. He looked weak as water then, and I pitied him, and pitying him I pointed out what chance we had. "There's the cliff, and there's what's below. It's one chance in ten to a man that can leap well."

"I never could leap well, Martin."

"No, you couldn't—nor do anything much that other boys could do—no money in leaping, I s'pose. But there it is—and you c'n have your choice. Will you jump first, or last?"

"You go first, Martin. If you make it, maybe you c'n help me—maybe pass me a bit of line or something. See, I've got a bit of line I took along. You go first, Martin—you go first. It's an awful jump to take, though."

"There's men of your crew took more awful jumps to-night, George Hoodley. They jumped from this world to the other when the spars went. Well, I'm going. Give me room to swing my arms. Now, if I miss, good-by. If we both miss, then I s'pose we'll be standing up and giving account together in a few minutes. I've got enough on my conscience, but I'm glad I'm not you. Stand clear of me now—when she lifts, I'm going."

The *Cromwell* lifted. Her bowsprit rose up and up till the end of it was higher than the ledge in the wall of rock before us. I waited till the last little second—till the bowsprit swayed in toward the cliff, and then, while it balanced there and before it started to settle again, knowing, as you all know, the power that's in the uplift of a sea, I gathered myself and jumped. And 'twas a good leap. I didn't think I could do it, cold and numb as I'd been feeling. A good leap, yes. And 'twas the wet, slippery shelf of rock I landed on; but I went a yard clear, and even when I slipped a little I checked myself before I slipped back to the edge, and was safe. Well, I lay there till I felt my nerve steady again, then stood up and called for the line from the Skipper.

"Now, when you jump," I says, "I'll get what brace I can here, so if you slip on the edge same's I did there'll be a chance to save you. But mind you, George Hoodley, if I find I can't hold you up—if it's to be your life or mine—it's you that's got to go. Mind that. And hurry—throw it. That bowsprit won't be there in a few minutes, maybe. Hurry up!"

"But you'll hang on, won't you, Martin? You've got the strength, if you want to use it."

"Jump, man, jump afore you lose your nerve entirely," I hollers.

He threw the line to me, after taking one end of it around his waist. The other end I took around my waist, my end half hitched so I could slip it in a hurry. I warn't throwing my life away for him, if I knew it.

Well, he jumped at last. And the bowsprit rose full as high and gave him full as good a chance as I'd got. But even so he fell a little short. His feet only caught the edge of the shelf. He staggered, and seeing how it was, I braced my feet well as I could and hauled. He came in, sagged away, I bracing my feet—they were slipping. In a crack in the rock of the ledge I dug the fingers of one hand, the other hand to the line, and hung on. We were gaining; he was fairly on his feet, and I felt the strain easing, when a sea that swept up the side of the cliff like a tidal wave took him clear of everything. It would have swept me, too, but I gripped where I could get a hold, with the fingers of my one loose hand in the crack in the rocks, and hung on there—one hand to the crack and the other to the line—hung on so, supporting the weight of myself and the Skipper, until I felt my muscles getting hot and heavy and my breath coming fast. He was floundering somewhere on the edge of the cliff. I hollered to him, though feeling almost certain he was battered to pieces by then—"How is it with you, George—how is it, man?" but there was no answer. Again I hollered, and again no answer. And then, when I was satisfied that it was only the last ounce of strength I had left, I called out, "Help yourself, George—why don't you help yourself?" No answer. Once more I called, and once more getting no answer set me wondering if he'd been beaten to death against the cliff, or was it terror of death made him speechless? I called once more to make sure, and, still getting no answer, and the weight of him like a cask of lead, and my feet slipping from under me, "The Lord have mercy on your soul, George Hoodley," I said, and let slip the line.

Toward the end of Martin's story it had become very quiet in the forec's'le. Nobody said anything, neither broke in with a question nor offered any comment, until after a long silence, and then not until after Martin himself had repeated absently, as if to himself, and after a long indrawn breath, " And then I let slip the line." Only then did he look around and seem to realize that he was not on the ledge off Whitehead.

He tucked his pipe away under his mattress, slipped out of his slip-shods, slacked away his suspenders, and laid his length in his bunk. He was about to draw the curtain, but his eye catching the eye of the man just come off watch, who was then hauling off his wet boots, he had to ask, " What's it look like for the morning, Stevie—what'd the Skipper say?"

" He says that unless it moderates a bit more than it looks as if 'twill now, we'll stay aboard in the morning."

" Well, here's one that isn't sorry to hear that. I don't mind sayin', now it's all over, that hanging on to the bottom of that dory warn't any joke to-day. I'm good and tired. 'Twas a night like this we headed the *Cromwell* to the west'ard. ' Hell or Gloucester,' says he, and it warn't Gloucester. Good-night, boy."

# V

# PRICE O' FISH

SHE was the *Mary Gurley* of Gloucester and under a two-reefed foresail she was easing herself into the tumbling seas.

Sam Leary and Archie Gillis had the watch. From the lee of a piece of tarpaulin lashed to the forerigging they from time to time would have a look to windward.

It was a day of high winds and high seas, and the hard rain came shooting into their faces every time they had a windward look; but otherwise, she being a great vessel, as all men out o' Gloucester well knew, it wasn't the worst kind of a Grand Banks day at all.

Just to be doing something, Archie began to dance little jigs and Sam to sing:

"In sailin' through this wide, wide world
In poverty or riches,
Always keep her head to sea
An' ease her when she pitches."

So sang Sam, the same being from the ancient Trawler's Toast. He was going on with more of the same kind when:

"Sail ho!" roared Archie; and the hail must have reached the ears of the gang below deck, because almost at once the inquiring head of Joe Gurley came sticking up through the cabin hatchway. Joe was the Skipper.

"Steamer," shouted Archie down the deck. "West bound. A big brute with four funnels an' smoke enough rollin' up from her to cloud out half the heavens. The *Great Syndic,* hah, Skipper?"

"That's who. An' cert'nly steamin' careful enough."

"To the south'ard of her reg'lar course, ain't she, Skipper?"

Joe nodded. "Got word of ice driftin' down to the west'ard, prob'ly."

"A few days more an' I s'pose it'll be drivin' us out of here too, hah, Skipper?"

"If we're here. But give me one more day's good fishin' an' off for the Boston Market you'll see us swingin'."

"O, the seas 're white 'n' curly
An' the flyin' *Mary Gurley,*"

hummed Sam.

"Out the way for it's home she's comin'
Her house awash an' her riggin' hummin'—

this from Archie.

Joe could not quite hear them, but he guessed what they were singing. He smiled. "Was ever a good vessel built that liked to loaf on the way home?" he said, pulled the hatch over his disappearing head and let the pair have the deck again.

With quick peeps around the edge of the weather tarpaulin Sam and Archie watched the great steamer sink her high funnels below the western horizon. Said Sam then: "Johnnie Duncan crossed on her one time, an' he was telling me, Archie, she's got elevators in her, an' billiard tables. An' a couple of her big decks're hung on gymbals like a compass——"

"What for?"

"So they'll lay steady an' no cabin passengers be rolled out of their beds if it comes on rough. An' she's got one o' those gymnasiums where the passengers can exercise their what they call sluggish livers, Johnnie said. An' artificial horses for the fat old geezers to ride. An' camels—one hump and two humps—take your choice."

"A hell of a choice! They oughter come out in a dory, an' haul a few tubs o' trawls of a nice, cold winter's mornin' an whatever else ailed 'em I'll bet it wouldn't be any sluggish livers by the time they got back to the vessel."

"Prob'ly not. But Johnnie's crossed on a whole fleet of those big steamers goin' to Europe, an' he was tellin' me he's met people who want to go to Europe but they're so scared something'll happen 'em crossin' that they don't go."

Archie eyed Sam. "Say, Sam, artificial horses an' camels—one hump or two humps—'re maybe all right, but people scared to cross the ocean in a big steamer—you can put that back in your diddy-box."

"You don't think Johnnie'd lie, do you?"

"No, no. But sometimes, Archie, I think he's a great little kidder, that same Johnnie Duncan."

Wind and sea moderated. The *Mary Gurley* got in her one more day's good fishing, and then it was up sail and point her westerly. And she was making good way of it to the west'ard when she raised a steamer with a flag of distress in the rigging.

A little old tramp she turned out to be, and her crew in the rigging were waiting for her to sink. Two boats were swinging to her davits aft. Joe luffed the *Mary,* and pointing to the boats, called out: "Lower 'em, will you?"

"Too rough to lower them," hailed back a voice.

"I don't s'pose it's any use blamin' them—they don't have to make their livin' handlin' small boats," said Joe to his crew. "But what d'y' say—who'll go with me in a dory and take 'em off?"

Whereat Sam Leary stepped forth saying: "There's willin' men enough in the crew of the *Mary Gurley* to man every dory she's got without callin' on you, Skipper, an' here's one!"

"An' me!"

"An me, an' me, an' me!"

"But don't forget, Skipper, that the top dory in the nest to wind'ard is mine an' Archie's," yelled Sam.

So Captain Gurley, who was never known to play favorites, said: "All right—you an' Archie try it."

With easy seamanship—though of course a great vessel to handle as all men out o' Gloucester well knew—Joe Gurley laid the *Mary* under the steamer's lee. His crew then did dexterously put the No. 4 dory over the rail, and watching their chance Archie and Sam did just as dexterously drop into it; and with a line paying out from the vessel—the line in case they capsized—they guided the dory to the steamer's side.

In four trips they took the sixteen men of the tramp, and nothing worse happened than that the dory filled to her gunnels on their second trip, and her side was smashed in getting back aboard from the last trip. It was good dory work—Joe Gurley said so to Sam and Archie; and looking back to the steamer as she went down, he also said to her Captain—Gedge by name: "I never see one o' those old hulks o' steamers that some owners shove out—with good insurance on 'em—but it makes me feel grateful I'm putting in my days and nights to sea in an able, well-found sailin' vessel."

"Of all the damn imperdence!" was the best Gedge could find to say to that; but he was under a strain at the time. Later he did better.

Once more the *Mary* was making good headway to the westward and Captain Gedge, having been dried out and fed, was standing beside Joe on the *Mary's* quarter. It was a gray day, a slate-colored hard sea and a gray sky, and for some time

Captain Gedge had been staring ahead saying: "Yes, no, yes, no." And finally: "Yes, by George, it is!"

It was an iceberg, a good-sized one, showing 400 feet or so of her length and perhaps 100 feet of her height out of water. "Looks like a great, white tombstone against that gray sea and sky, don't it, Captain?" said Gedge.

"Something like," admitted Joe.

That was off the *Mary's* windward bow. Gedge bent down and had a long look under her fore-boom; and by and by he looked up to Joe, saying: "And another one off her lee bow. How about those icebergs, Captain Gurley?"

"Oh, no special harm in them," said Joe. "This my old loafin' ground—all these Grand Banks. I know these big Banks 'bout as well as my kitchen at home, I s'pose. Thirty years now, I've wintered an' summered here an' you don't want ever to worry over-much 'bout icebergs. There's always a kind of a fresh water smell—see—like"—Joe sniffed up into the air—"a fresh water smell somethin' like we're gettin' now off an iceberg to wind'ard. Of course if the sea's been hubbly all around same as to-day an' all at once to smoothen out, then you want to watch out—you're gettin' handy to the lee of a big one of 'em then."

The steamer man looked at Joe; and had another look ahead to windward and another peek ahead to leeward, and then he had a long peek dead ahead. "One over each bow an' if I ain't mistaken there's another big one dead ahead!"

"There is," said Joe. "I been lookin' at it for ten minutes."

Whereat the other pulled a long face, and after a time he said: "Look here, Captain, you may be able to smell icebergs in the dark but everybody can't do that. And you can't be on deck always. It's coming on to dark, and you'll have to go below sometime—if it's only for five minutes to get a cup of coffee. How if you are below an' we should run into one of those big white things in the dark?"

To which Joe said: "Captain, don't ever put me down in your log for bein' any foolish kind. You maybe notice awhile ago I took the gaff tops'l off this vessel. Well, when a man makin' a drive for market takes the main tops'l off his vessel it means something. I took that gaff tops'l off so if we do happen to run onto one of those bergs in the dark, why whoever's on watch'll only have to let her main peak come down by the run and when they do she'll just nachrally swing off herself."

The steamer man clucked in his throat, and then: "But I say, Captain, suppose in swinging off from one iceberg she runs onto another, then what?"

And Joe said to that: "Lord in Heaven, man! Don't you know when a vessel's trying to make a passage she's got to take a few little chances?" And all that night the *Mary* logged her twelve to twelve and a half knots through the icebergs.

They were still there, marking white niches in the gray dawn, but by noon of that day they all lay bright and shining and harmless astern.

It was a great day, that day, with the wind freshening and the sea not yet rough enough to check the vessel's way; and making his way aft from having a mug-up forward, Joe paused in the windward cabin gangway, and leaning over the cabin house he watched his vessel go along. And by and by he began to talk of her to Sam Leary, who had the wheel. "There's many a fine vessel hailin' out o' Gloucester, Sam, an' Boston, but the equal of this one to edge off a bad lee or carry a long main sheet in a gale—I doubt did she ever sail in or out past Eastern Point or the Boston lightship. What a vessel! Look at the long leaps of her now," and he cast a glance to where the upper sails of a big ship could be just seen astern, "an' that big fuhla back there hardly more than joggin'!"

"We cert'nly scandalized that big brute drivin' by," said Sam, "though their wages'll be waiting 'em, no matter what kind of a passage they make."

"But let us loaf and where'd our families be, hah, Sam? Besides how can that round bowed an' lumpy quartered kind sail? But this one! Look at her now, easin' herself in an' easin' herself out with a wake no wider than if 'twas a sharp knife drawed through the ocean! What a vessel! What a vessel!"

Joe studied her straining sails, and her sheets like iron bars and the roaring belt of foam she was carrying to leeward; and he looked at Archie Gillis who was standing his forward watch between the double-griped nests of dories in the waist; and again at Sam Leary taking what ease he could to the wheel, he being lashed there and to his waist in solid water. Taking an extra grip of the weather rail to keep from being bounced to leeward: "What a vessel!" Joe said again; and watching his chance, he dove into the cabin where he found half a dozen of his crew balancing themselves on the lockers, while about as many of the rescued crew were taking what ease they could in the bunks.

The rescued Captain was lying in Joe's own bunk. "What a vessel! You ought to go up on deck an' see her spinnin' the knots off," said Joe to him.

"Only a blooming fool would be up on that deck a day like this," answered Gedge pleasantly.

"Or of course the men on watch," replied Joe. "Or me, her skipper, or—" he stopped.

The vessel had shaken herself, lain calm, and jumped away again almost as he spoke. Joe stepped to the hatchway, drew the slide about an inch and yelled: "No more comin' to—keep her a full—a good full always, Sam."

And Sam called back: "All right, a good full I'll give her."

"What is she logging now?" asked Gedge.

"Oh-h, a good fifteen!"

"Fifteen knots! A boat this size!"

"Her size? She's a hundred an' seventeen feet over all. I've seen her do better than fifteen and a half for fifteen hours runnin'. Her size? How big d'y' want a vessel to be? I've seen her come home from Flemish Cap, an' she loggin' her three hundred an' forty-two to three forty-six miles for three days runnin'. Oh, but that was a passage! I drove her, an' I drove her, an' I drove her"—with every "drove her" Joe whipped his right forearm across his body—"but could I make her quit? The man never lived could make the *Mary Gurley* quit!"

"A man listening to you would think you were talking about your wife," said the steamer Captain.

"There's many a man has less cause to praise his wife than me the *Mary Gurley,* and be sure it was my own wife and nobody else's wife I named this vessel for. And——"

He said no more then, because across the cabin floor he was hove; across the cabin floor everybody from the windward bunks and lockers was hove, and with that there was a great crashing of something coming down on her deck above.

They cleared themselves, and by and by made their way to the deck and looked around. The mainmast had been broken short off near the deck. Archie was climbing down out of the weather foreriggin': "I see it comin'," said Archie. "It whistled like a fleet of harbor steamboats an' a roarin' white sea with it. I took one peek and up the riggin' you bet I went."

They looked for Sam. He was hauling himself back over the lee rail by his life line. "I saw it coming, too," said Sam. "But keep her a good full you said, and a good full I kept her!"

"You did all right," said Joe. "No fault to you." He looked at the mainmast where it lay in the sea to leeward; he looked at the foremast, which was all but flat out on the water; he looked at what was left of their dories, drifting and tossing on the white seas; he looked at the windward rail, which was cocked high in the air.

"Hove down! But look at her, will you? Laid that big mainmast of hers o'er the rail and not a yip out of her! What a vessel! What a vessel!"

Johnnie Duncan was in the smoker of a chair car on the train to Boston. Sitting next to Johnnie was a man who had long been immersed in a New York paper. By and by he slapped down his paper and said solemnly to Johnnie: "Young man, do you know anything of the sea?"

"Not much, sir. But I was born and brought up in Gloucester."

"Gloucester? Oh-h, that fishing place! Sail out in little smacks from there, don't they?"

"We call them vessels," said Johnnie. "And they are not so little. Longer than a Pullman car on the water line some of them."

"I dare say. But here is something about a ship, the *Great Syndic,* which is longer than a dozen Pullmans. And there is what I like to read about—great ships and heroic deeds at sea. Here! read that!"

There was a column on the front page and two columns more on an inside page. Johnnie glanced through it, and laid down the paper without comment.

"Finished already?" inquired the stranger. "Wasn't it wonderful? That terrible storm on those dangerous Newfoundland Banks, and that great steamer seven or eight hundred feet long, seven decks, thirty thousand—or was it forty thousand horse-power?"

"All of forty," said Johnnie. "And her bridge is sixty-five feet above her water line."

"And wasn't it splendid on the part of those saloon passengers to present the Captain with that huge loving cup?"

"Wonderful. What do you suppose he'll do with it?"

"Why, that will be an heirloom forever—for his family. A material proof, as the spokesman put it and as they had it engraved on the cup—of his heroism and seamanship in taking that great ship through that great storm on the Grand Banks."

"I guess that Captain is all right," said Johnnie. "I guess most of those steamer people are all right. I know I've met some who are great people, but do you think it is going to make better seamen of them to have a lot of old ladies of saloon passengers swelling them up for doing what they should be put in jail for if they couldn't do? Where's the danger in the open sea to a steamer her size?"

"What's that!"

"Just that. Give credit to her black gang for keeping her engines and boilers right, but where's the danger to a ship her size in the open sea? Eight hundred feet long and forty thousand horse-power—what do you suppose those little fishing smacks, as you call them, were doing out there on those same Newfoundland Banks while that great steamer was having such a terrible time?"

Which ended the conversation. The man soon went out, leaving his New York paper behind him. Arriving in Boston Johnnie took the New York paper with him.

Johnnie had business in Boston. It concerned a salt ship. So from the South Station he hurried down to the water front to see about it. Turning into Long Wharf Johnnie saw that his salt ship was already in the slip. But her master had gone up on Atlantic Avenue to where—this was one of the great days before the Great Drouth—to a little place where thirsty mariners were fond of going for a glass of beer or two after weeks at sea. Fishermen from T Wharf, which is next to Long Wharf, were coming and going as Johnnie looked into the place.

He found his salt Captain, but did not break in on him because he was surrounded by a crowd who were eagerly listening to his talk of a happening out to sea.

"A day of wind and sea (the salt Captain was saying)—a terribly squally bad day. We were to the south'ard of Sable Island coming along under short sail. A two-masted schooner comes up from astern, with not a reef or a wrinkle to a single sail she's carrying, and she goes on by like a jumping ghost."

"'That one—she'll come to trouble before she goes much further,'" I said to my first officer, and he agreed with me. And she did. Two hours later we come on her, and she's hove down. No day for a vessel to be hove down; and I maneuver my ship up under her quarter and I hailed her with a megaphone: 'You seem to be in a bad way there!' I called out.

"And a man stands forth from among them—her captain of course—and he shouts back: 'Who's in a bad way!'

"'Why, you. It looks to me as if she's going to roll over.'

"'Don't you worry about this one,' he says. 'I've tried her out too often not to know what she c'n do, and she's not goin' to roll over.'

"'But I'd better take you off, hadn't I?' I said.

"He looks up at me. I'm up at quarter rail of my big 1800 ton ship, mind you, and he's standing up on the weather run of his little vessel—nothing but wreckage around him: 'Take who off? Us? No—no—we're all right. We all aboard here know what this one is, and I'm tellin' you she's goin' home. But wait. We got a few people we picked up. Some of 'em would like to go along with you but our dories're all washed away. Will you lower your boats an' take 'em off?'

"'This is no sea to be lowerin' boats in!' I says.

"'All right! They'll stay aboard here then, I guess. That's all.'

"'I'd better stand by, hadn't I?' I hails again.

"'Stand by for what?'

"'Why if anything happens.'

"'Happens to this one? A hundred good breezes she's lived through, an' I know her. She's only rolled down to take a little rest, and when I pass her the word, up she'll come boundin'!'

"'You mean I can't do anything for you?' I ask him.

"'What's there to do?'—he hollers back.

"'What's there to do?' There she was, a little schooner flat down on her side, her deck swept clean, her mainmast carried away and trying to punch holes in her deck, a mess of tangled rigging all round, and he asks me 'what's there to do!' as if he's mad with me trying to help him.

"I get mad myself and: 'If you feel that way about it, perhaps I'd better be going on about my business,' I says.

"'If you got any business to be goin' on about, perhaps you'd better,' he said.

"And so I slack off, and we go on our way. I've said it was blowing then, but next day it comes on to blow good—a hurricane—and we're crossing the Bay of Fundy, and some of you may know what an ebb tide runs out o' that place, and what a place it is with a southeast gale driving up to meet that ebb tide. I hove our ship to, and we stayed hove to for two days and a night. Then it moderated and we make some sail and resumed our passage and here we are—just in. But you've seen the last of that little fishing schooner. No vessel crippled as she was could possibly live through that storm. Yes, thank you, I'll have another beer."

"An' when I give her the word up she'll come boundin'!" was echoing in Johnnie Duncan's ears. He pushed through the crowd: "Captain, what was the name of that little vessel?"

"The *Mary Gurley*."

"Of Gloucester?"

"Of Gloucester."

Johnnie pushed back from the crowd, took a window seat and stared blankly down the slip.

The *Mary Gurley* gone! And Joe Gurley and Sam Leary and Archie Gillis, and all her fine crew.

A great vessel and a great skipper. A fish killer, a sail carrier, a master mariner—oh, what a master mariner was gone! In vacation days with Joe out on the fishing ground Johnnie had come to know what a master mariner he was; and nights more than days, because it is in the dark nights, when a man has to feel even more than see what's coming down on him from out of a wild ocean, that he needs to prove his mastery of the sea.

And the great Joe Gurley was gone! And all his fine crew! It was a loss of more than a great skipper and his twenty-one men. Where else but in the fishing life were such seamen bred, and when they were gone who would keep their great spirit alive?

Johnnie recalled a dozen great days and nights with the master and crew of the *Mary Gurley*. He recalled the days when his high ambition was to grow up to be master of a fine, big fishing schooner, if so be it was in him to be such.

But successful vessel owners and merchants do not let their sons take to the bank fishing these days. Johnnie went to college and not to sea. And he knew what it was to have the cheering sections make the concrete pillars of various stadiums rock to his name. It was great and he liked it, but men on teams which filled the public eye were always cheered. Johnnie had seen better men than himself come on the field and leave it with never a single cheer, with hardly a spectator to inquire their names. They came from the little schools and he belonged to a big college—therein lay the difference. And so these great men of the fishing fleet! They manned the little vessels, and of what importance are the little vessels beside the huge steamers which never come and go but great newspapers take notice?

Johnnie came to know the big steamers even as he knew the little vessels. He would come back to Gloucester from a trip on a big steamer and he would sit down on the string piece of his uncle's wharf, looking down the harbor and out toward the sea. A clear, beautiful day it might be with the harbor waters dimpling under the dancing sun and all around would be peace and pure content.

Or it might be a rough but joyous day, with an easterly wind roaring in like something out of a colossal funnel from the sea and somebody would perhaps say then: "What a breeze for a drive home!" And another: "Man but I'd like to see"—and he might name Tommie Ohlsen, or Tommie Clancy or Wesley Marrs, or Joe Gurley—"Man, but I'd like to be seein' Joe Gurley come roarin' in now under his four lowers—four whole lowers, and maybe not even a sight of the cabin stove pipe showin' clear of the cabin house for the smother of water sloshing over her! Yes, sir, Joe Gurley, an' the *Mary* roarin' in past the Point to a whole mains'l."

Or it might be another sort of a day and in past the Point would come a wreck of a vessel; or no masts or sails might be missing, but her flag would be to half mast. And then would come the reluctant step of the men up the wharf, and by and by the tale of death would be told. But with no wide advertising in the telling. An owner and his clerks might hear it in the office at the head of the dock, or a group of other fishermen in the parlor of their boarding house; or a wife beside a kitchen table and the children grouped around her. But wherever it was told the loud wail against Fate was seldom heard. Toil and danger belonged to the fishing, and if sometimes Death took his toll, what less could be expected?

The organized cheering mobs enhancing the prestige of a great institution did no great harm and perhaps some good. And the newspaper columns about the great steamers—why not? No harm to reassure timid travelers; but surely it was true that the men who measured up to the highest standards of all time had usually to pass on to get their real rating.

The murmur of the salt captain's voice had died away. There was a commotion in the crowd behind Johnnie. The echo of a familiar voice vibrated in Johnnie's ears. He turned from his window.

"What you sayin' about the *Mary Gurley?*" the voice was saying. "What you—but say—ain't you the Captain o' that big barque?"

"I am Captain of a salt bark, yes. Who are you?"

"I'm one of the *Mary Gurley's* crew."

"No?"

"Yes."

"Well, well! Picked off, were you?"

"Picked off the *Mary?* Not much. She got in last night."

"What! Got a tow? But how'd they ever get her in through that storm?"

"They didn't get her in. Nobody got her in. She come in herself an' all hands with her. She's tied up to the north side o' T Wharf right now. An—hulloh-h, Johnnie!"

All Johnnie could do was to hang on to Sam's hand and give him little shakes, and say: "What happened? What happened?"

"Nothin' happened. After we was hove-down the skipper said to clear away the wreckage, an' we cleared it away. Then he said to save the mains'l an' boom an' gaff. An, we saved 'em. 'Bend it to the forem'st in place o' that fores'l,' he said next—when the vessel righted, that was—and we bent it. 'And now on our course again for the Boston market,' he said; and we put her on her course again. And while I s'pose that big loafer of a bark was hove-to waitin' for it to moderate, the *Mary* was makin' her thirteen or fourteen knots to the west'ard sloop-rigged, an'—but, say, Johnnie, I been pitchin' fish for two hours—what d'y say to a little taste o' something coolin'?"

Having poured into Sam his little taste of something cooling and bought a Boston afternoon paper off a newsboy on the Avenue, Johnnie hurried him along to T Wharf, where he found Joe Gurley watching the hoisting out of his fish.

They shook hands, Johnnie saying: "Hello, Joe! Good trip?" And Joe saying: "Hello, Johnnie! Pretty good."

And Sam Leary having joined Archie Gillis pitching fish into a dealer's cart on the dock, Johnnie shook hands with Archie, and said then to Joe: "I see you've changed the *Mary's* rig, Joe. How'd she act?"

"Fine! An' if you'd never seen her a schooner, Johnnie, you'd think she was modeled to be sloop-rigged."

"But they say a sloop don't stay hove-to anything like a schooner, Joe."

"We didn't sloop-rig the *Mary* to heave her to, Johnnie. I knew what the *Mary* could take with four whole lowers on her, so with only three lowers it looked to me like she ought to stand up to anything ever blowed. An' she was standin' up, stepping along like a lady, when one o' those steamer people we picked up——"

"What people you picked up?"

"Sam didn't tell you? No? Well, no great reason he should except him 'n' Archie handled the dory that took 'em off an old hulk of a steamer, an' this night it's blowin' some an' we're hoppin' across the Bay o' Fundy, an' this steamer Captain'd been down for'ard eatin' an' he comes aft to where I'm standing by the wheel watchin' her, an' he puts his mouth up to my ear an' he yells—'I'm worried about this vessel. It's terrible on her for'ard there, Captain.'"

"'What's terrible?' I says.

"'Why, the poundin' an' the jumpin' when she dives into those seas. And her for'ard plankin' must be loose, for there's nothin' but sea water sloshin' 'round her fo'c'sle floor. It's terrible!'

"'Terrible, is it? Then s'pose you stay aft an' you won't know it's so terrible!' I says.

"An' wouldn't that chafe any man's patience, Johnnie? We haul him an' his crew off a sinking old hulk, and we give 'em 'bout all the dry clothes we got, an' the last of what's left in the medicine chest that's any good to drink, an' he stands 'round an' hints I got a weak vessel. O' course any vessel that's been drove five or six years is bound to be a little bit loose for'ard. But to go worryin' about what'll happen her! 'Go below and stay there!' I says, and he does, and don't poke his head up again till we hit the dock.

"An' we're no more than tied up to the dock, Johnnie, when I say to Sam here: 'For God's sake, go on up and get one of those taxicabs, and ship that man to a hotel or wherever he thinks it'll be safe for him to stop overnight.' And Sam does."

"See here, Joe"—Johnnie had unfolded his Boston paper—

"I see by the fish market column here where the *Mary Gurley* hailed for so many thousand cod, so many thousand haddock, so many halibut and mixed fish—but I don't see where you hailed for any people you rescued."

"No? Do we get any more for our fish because we got a deck load o' shipwrecked people aboard? Not since I've been fishing we haven't. But talkin' about fish prices, they're proper pirates, Johnnie, these buyers here. Now, I got sixty thousand o' the fattest, sweetest market cod, salt slacked, down in the *Mary's* hold right now, and what you can do for me, Johnnie, is to telephone your uncle in Gloucester an' ask him what price for 'em. Will you?"

"Sure I will. But, Joe"—Johnnie was now looking at his New York paper—"where were you a week ago to-day?"

"Why, about the same place we were two an' three weeks ago—west o' Flemish Cap. Why?"

"Blowing hard that day, was it?"

"Blowin' a good breeze, yes."

"Was it rough?"

"M-m—too rough to put the dories over, and so we lay there hove-to. But why?"

"Suppose you'd been sailing, making a passage, say?"

"Oh—I'd given her the four lowers, and if it was somebody alongside her I'd maybe given her both tops'ls. But why?"

"The *Great Syndic* was——"

"We saw her that day. We get so we know all those big fuhlas passing west an' east. What of her?"

"The saloon passengers of the *Great Syndic* gave her Captain a loving cup on account of that day."

"In God's name for what?"

"For his"—Johnnie folded back the paper and read—"for his heroism and seamanship in taking his ship through a great storm on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland."

"For his what!"

"For his heroism and seamanship in——"

"Say, Johnnie—" the toe of Joe's big sea boot went tearing through Johnnie's paper. "Say, Johnnie, quit your kiddin', an' go an' telephone what price for that cod in Gloucester, will you? Go on, now!"

And Johnnie ran off; and as he did Archie Gillis turned to Sam Leary, saying: "A lovin' cup for his—didn't I say that day we was hove-to that Johnnie was a great little kidder?"

# VI

## THE TRAWLER

### I

To John Snow's home in Gloucester came the tale this night of how Arthur Snow was washed from the deck of Hugh Glynn's vessel and lost at sea; and it was Saul Haverick, his sea clothes still on him, who brought the word.

"I'm telling you, John Snow," said Saul—and he out of breath almost with the telling—"and others than me will by an' by be telling you, what a black night it was, with a high-running sea and wind to blow the last coat o' paint off the vessel, but o' course *he* had to be the first o' the fleet—nothing less would do *him*—to make the market with his big ketch. It was for others, not for him, to show the way to take in sail, he said, and not a full hour before it happened that was." Such was Saul Haverick's ending.

John Snow said nothing; Mrs. Snow said nothing. Saul looked to me, but I gave no sign that I had heard him. Only John Snow's niece, Mary, looking up from her hands folded in her lap, said: "Surely you must find it painful, Saul Haverick, to ship with such a wicked man and take the big shares of money that fall to his crew?"

"Eh!" said Saul, surprised like at her. "I'm not denying that he is a great fish killer, Mary Snow, and that we haven't shared some big trips with him; but it is like his religion, I'm telling you, to be able to say how he allowed no man ever he crossed tacks with to work to wind'ard of him. He's that vain he'd drive vessel, himself, and all hands to the bottom afore he'd let some folks think anything else of him."

"He lost my boy—we'll say no more of him," said John Snow.

"Aye," said Saul Haverick, "we'll speak no more of him. But I was Arthur's dory mate, John Snow, as you well know, and my heart is sick to think of it. I'll be going now," and go he did, softly, and by way of the back stairs; and he no more than gone when a knock came to the door.

After a time, the clock on the mantel ticking loud among us, John Snow called out: “Come in!”

## II

I remember how Hugh Glynn stepped within the door of John Snow's kitchen that night, and how he bent his head to step within; and, bending his head, took off his cap; and how he bowed to John Snow, Mrs. Snow, and Mary Snow in turn, and, facing John Snow, made as if to speak; but how his voice would not come, not until he had lifted his head yet higher and cleared his throat. And beginning again, he took a step nearer the middle of the floor, to where the light of the bracket lamp above the kitchen table shone full on his face. He was a grand man to look at, not only his face, but the height and build of him, and he was fresh in from sea.

“John Snow—and you, Mrs. Snow—the *Arbiter's* to ancher in the stream, and her flag's to half-mast. And knowing that, maybe there's no need to say anything more.”

Mrs. Snow said nothing, Mary Snow said nothing, but I remember how from under John Snow's brows the deep eyes glowed out.

“Go on,” said John Snow at last.

Hugh Glynn went on. “Well, he was a good boy, your Arthur—maybe you'd like to be told that, even by me, though of course you that was his father, John Snow, and you that was his mother, Mrs. Snow, know better than anybody else what he was. Three nights ago it was, and we to the south'ard of Sable Island in as nasty a breeze as I'd been in for some time. A living gale it was, a November no'wester—you know what that is, John Snow—but I'd all night been telling the crew to be careful, for a sea there was to sweep to eternity whoever it could 've caught loose around deck. I could 've hove her to and let her lay, but I was never one to heave to my vessel—not once I'd swung her off for home. And there, God help me, is maybe my weakness.

“She was under her gaff tops'l, but I see she couldn't stand it. ‘Boys,’ says I, ‘clew up that tops'l.’ Which they did, and put it in gaskets, and your Arthur, I mind, was one of the four men to go aloft to clew it up. Never a lad to shirk was Arthur. Well, a stouter craft of her tonnage than the *Arbiter* maybe never lived, nor no gear any sounder, but there are things o' God's that the things o' man were never meant to hold out against. Her jib flew to ribbons. 'Cut it clear!' I says, and nigh half the crew jump for'ard. Half a dozen of the crew to once, but Arthur,—your Arthur, your boy, Mrs. Snow, your son, John Snow—he was quick enough to be among the half-dozen. Among a smart crew he was never left behind. It looked safe for us all then, coming on to morning, but who can ever tell? Fishermen's lives, they're expected to go fast, but they're men's lives for all that, and 'Have a care!' I called to them, myself to the wheel at the time, where, God knows, I was careful.

"Well, I saw this big fellow coming, a mountain of water with a snow-white top to it against the first light of the morning. And I made to meet it. A better vessel than the *Arbiter* the hand o' man never turned out—all Gloucester knows that—but, her best and my best, there was no lifting her out of it. Like great pipe-organs aroaring this sea came, and over we went. Over we went, and I heard myself saying: 'God in Heaven! You great old wagon, but are you gone at last?' And said it again when maybe there was a fathom of water over my head—her quarter was buried that deep and she that long coming up. Slow coming up she was, though up she came at last. But a man was gone."

He had stopped; but he went on.

"It was Arthur, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow, who was gone. The boy you were expecting to see in this very room by now, he was gone. Little Arthur that ten years ago, when first I saw him, I could've swung to the ceiling of this room with my one finger—little Arthur was gone. Well, 'Over with a dory!' I said. And, gale and all, we over with a dory, with three of us in it. We looked and looked in that terrible dawn, but no use—no man short o' the Son o' God himself could 'a' stayed afloat, oilskins and red jacks, in that sea. But we had to look, and coming aboard the dory was stove in—smashed like 'twas a china teacup and not a new banker's double dory, against the rail. And it was cold. Our frost-bitten fingers slipped from her ice-wrapped rail, and the three of us nigh came to joining Arthur, and Lord knows—a sin, maybe you'll say, to think it, John Snow—but I felt then as if I'd just as soon, for it was a hard thing to see a man go down to his death, maybe through my foolishness. And to have the people that love him to face in the telling of it—that's hard, too."

He drew a great breath. "And"—again a deep breath and a deepened note of pain—"that's what I've come to tell you, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—how your boy Arthur was lost."

John Snow, at the kitchen table, I remember, one finger still in the pages of the black-lettered Bible he had been reading when Hugh Glynn stepped in, dropped his head on his chest and there let it rest. Mrs. Snow was crying out loud. Mary Snow said nothing, nor made a move, except to sit in her chair by the window and look to where, in the light of the kitchen lamp, Hugh Glynn stood.

There was a long quiet. Hugh Glynn spoke again. "Twenty years, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—twenty good years I've been fishing out o' Gloucester, and in that time not much this side the western ocean I haven't laid a vessel's keel over. From Greenland to Hatteras I've fished, and many smart seamen I've been shipmates with—dory, bunk, and watch mates with in days gone by—and many a grand one of 'em I've known to find his grave under the green-white ocean, but never a smarter, never an abler fisherman than your boy Arthur. Boy and man I knew him, and, boy and man, he did his work. I thought you might like to hear that from me, John Snow. And not much more than that can I say now, except to add, maybe, that when the Lord calls, John Snow, we must go, all of us. The Lord called and Arthur went. He had a good life before him—if he'd lived. He'd've had his own vessel soon—could've had one before this—if he'd wanted. But 'No,' he says, 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh.' He loved me and I loved him. 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh," he says, but, staying with me, he was lost, and if I was old enough to have a grown son o' my own, if 'twas that little lad who lived only long enough to teach me what it is to have hope of a fine son and then to lose him, if 'twas that little lad o' mine grown up, I doubt could I feel it more, John Snow."

John Snow let slip his book and stood up, and for the first time looked fair at Hugh Glynn. "We know, Captain Glynn," John Snow said, "and I'm thanking you now. It's hard on me, hard on us all—our only son, Captain—our only child. But, doubtless, it had to come. Some goes young and some goes old. It came to him maybe earlier than we ever thought for, or he thought for, no doubt, but—it come. And what you have told us, Captain, is something for a man to be hearing of his son—and to be hearing it from you. And only this very night, with the word of you come home, my mind was hardening against you, Captain Glynn, for no denying I've heard hard things even as I've heard great things of you. But now I've met you, I know they mixed lies in the telling, Captain Glynn. And as for Arthur—" John Snow stopped.

"As for Arthur"—'twas something to listen to, the voice of Hugh Glynn then, so soft there was almost no believing it—"as for Arthur, John Snow, he went as all of us will have to go if we stop long enough with the fishing."

"Aye, no doubt. As you may go yourself, Captain?"

"As I expect to go, John Snow. To be lost some day—what else should I look forward to?"

"A black outlook, Captain."

"Maybe, maybe. And yet a man's death at the last."

"So 'tis, Captain—so 'tis."

John Snow and Hugh Glynn gripped hands, looked into each other's eyes, and parted—Hugh Glynn out into the night again and John Snow, with Mrs. Snow, to their room, from where I could hear her sobbing. I almost wanted to cry myself, but Mary Snow was there. I went over and stood behind her. She was looking after some one through the window.

It was Hugh Glynn walking down the steep hill. Turning the corner below, I remember how he looked back and up at the window.

For a long silence Mary Snow sat there and looked out. When she looked up and noticed me, she said: "It's a hard life, the bank fishing, Simon. The long, long nights out to sea, the great gales; and when you come home, no face, it may be, at the door to greet you."

"That it is, Mary."

"I saw his wife one day, Simon," said Mary Snow softly, "and the little boy with her. But a week before they were killed together that was; six years ago, and he, the great, tall man, striding between them. A wonderful, lovely woman and a noble couple, I thought. And the grand boy! And I at that heedless age, Simon, it was a rare person, be it man or woman, I ran ahead to see again."

"Come from the window, Mary," I said to that, "and we'll talk of things more cheerful."

"No, no, Simon—don't ask me to talk of light matters to-night." With that and a "Good night" she left me for her room.

Out into the street I went. John Snow's house stood at the head of a street atop of a steep hill, and I remember how I stood on the steps of John Snow's house and looked down the slope of the hill, and below the hill to the harbor, and beyond the harbor to clear water. It was a cold winter moonlight, and under the moon the sea heaved and heaved and heaved. There was no break in the surface of that sea that night, but as it heaved, terribly slow and heavy, I thought I could feel the steps beneath me heaving with it.

## III

All that night I walked the streets and roads of Cape Ann, walking where my eyes would lose no sight of that sea to which I had been born, and thinking, thinking, thinking always to the surge and roar of it; and in the morning I went down to where Hugh Glynn's vessel lay in dock; and Hugh Glynn himself I found standing on the string-piece, holding by the hand and feeding candy to the little son of one of his crew, the while half a dozen men were asking him, one after the other, for what I, too, had come to ask.

My turn came. "I never met you to speak to before, Captain Glynn," I began, "but I was a friend of Arthur Snow's, and I was hopeful for the chance to ship with you in Arthur's place."

"My name is Simon Kippen," I went on, when he made no answer. "I was in John Snow's kitchen when you came in last night."

"I know"—he waved the hand that wasn't holding the little boy—"I know. And"—he almost smiled—"you're not afraid to come to sea with me?"

"Why more afraid," I said, "than you to take me with you?"

"You were a great friend of Arthur's?"

"A friend to Arthur—and more if I could," I answered.

He had a way of throwing his head back and letting his eyes look out, as from a distance, or as if he would take the measure of a man. 'Twas so he looked out at me now.

"He's a hard case of a man, shouldn't you say, Simon Kippen, who would play a shipmate foul?"

I said nothing to that.

"And, master or hand, we're surely all shipmates," he added; to which again I said nothing.

"Will you take Saul Haverick for dory mate?" he said again.

"I bear Saul Haverick no great love," I said; "but I have never heard he wasn't a good fisherman, and who should ask more than that of his mate in a dory?"

He looked out at me once more from the eyes that seemed so far back in his head; and from me he looked to the flag that was still to the half-mast of his vessel for the loss of Arthur Snow.

"We might ask something more in a dory mate at times, but he is a good fisherman," he answered at last. "A good hand to the wheel of a vessel, too, a cool head in danger, and one of the best judges of weather ever I sailed with. We're putting out in the morning. You can have the chance."

As to what was in my heart when I chose to ship with Hugh Glynn, I cannot say. There are those who tell us how they can explain every heart-beat, quick or slow, when aught ails them. I never could. I only know that standing on the steps of Mary Snow's house the night before, all my thought was of Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street after Hugh Glynn. And "God help you, Simon Kippen!" I found myself saying—"it's not you, nor Saul Haverick, nor any other living man will marry Mary Snow while Hugh Glynn lives, for there is no striving against the strength of the sea, and the strength of Hugh Glynn is the strength of the sea." But of what lay beyond that in my heart I could not say.

And now I was to sea with Hugh Glynn, and we not four days out of Gloucester when, as if but to show me the manner of man he was, he runs clear to the head of Placentia Bay, in Newfoundland, for a baiting on our way to the banks; and whoever knows Placentia Bay knows what that means, with the steam-cutters of the Crown patrolling, and their sleepless watches night and day aloft, to trap whoever would try to buy a baiting there against the law.

No harm fell to Hugh Glynn that time. No harm ever fell to him, fishermen said. Before ever the cutters could get sight of him he had sight of them; and his bait stowed below, safe away he came, driving wild-like past the islands of the bay, with never a side-light showing in the night, and not the first time he had done so.

"What d'y' say to that, Simon? Didn't we fool 'em good?" he asked, when once more we were on the high seas and laying a free course for the western banks.

"I'm grateful you did not ask me to go in any dory to bring the bait off," I answered.

"Why is that, Simon?" he asked, as one who has no suspicion.

"It was against the law, Captain Glynn."

"But a bad law, Simon?"

"Law is law," I answered to that.

He walked from the wheel, where I was, twice to the break of the vessel and back again and said, in a voice no louder than was needful to be heard above what loose water was splashing over her quarter to my feet: "Don't be put out with me for what I'll tell you now, Simon. You're a good lad, Simon, and come of good people, but of people that for hundreds o' years have thought but one way in the great matters of life. And when men have lived with their minds set in the one way so long, Simon, it comes hard for them to understand any other way. Such unfrequent ones as differed from your people, Simon, them they cast out from among them. I know, I know, Simon, because I come from people something like to them, only I escaped before it was too late to understand that people who split tacks with you do not always do it to fetch up on a lee shore."

"And from those other people, no doubt, Captain Glynn, you learned it was right to break a country's laws?"

"It wasn't breaking our country's law, Simon, nor any good man's law, to get a baiting last night. There are a lot of poor fishermen, Simon—as none know better than yourself—in Placentia Bay who have bait to sell, and there is a law which says they must not. But whose law? An American law? No. God's law? No. The law of those poor people in Placentia Bay? No. Some traders who have the making of the laws? Yes. And there you have it. If the Placentia Bay fishermen aren't allowed to sell bait to me, or the like of me, they will have to sell it to the traders themselves, but have to take their one dollar, where we of Gloucester would pay them five, and, paying it, would give some of them and their families a chance to live."

He stood there in his rubber boots to his hips and his long greatcoat to his ankles—he was one who never wore oilskins aboard ship—swinging with the swing of the plunging vessel as if he was built into her, and with his head thrown back and a smile, it may be, that was not a smile at all, and kept looking at me from out of eyes that were changeable as the sea itself.

" Don't you be getting mad with me, Simon, because we don't think alike in some things. To the devil with what people think of you—I've said that often enough, Simon, but not when they're good people. If some people don't like us, Simon, there will come no nourishment to our souls. Some day you're going to come to my way o' thinking, Simon, because we two are alike underneath."

" Alike ! " I smiled to myself.

" Ay, alike at heart, Simon. We may look to be sailing wide apart courses now, but maybe if our papers were examined 'twould be found we'd cleared for the same last port of call, Simon."

And no more talk of anything like that between us until the night before we were to leave the fishing grounds for home. In the afternoon we had set our trawls, and, leaving the vessel, the skipper had said, " Our last set, boys. Let 'em lay to-night, and in the morning we'll haul "; and, returning aboard after setting, we had our supper and were making ready, such as had no watch to stand, to turn in for a good, long sleep against the labor of the morrow.

It was an oily sea that evening—a black, oily-smooth surface, lifting heavy and slow to a long swell. A smooth, oily sea—there is never any good comes out of it; but a beautiful sea notwithstanding, with more curious patterns of shifting colors than a man could count in a year playing atop of it. The colors coming and going and rolling and squirming—no women's shop ashore ever held such colors under the bright night-lights as under the low sun we saw this night on the western banks. It was a most beautiful and a most wicked sea to stop and look at.

And the sun went down that evening on a banking of clouds no less beautiful; a copper-red sun, and after 'twas gone, in lovely massy forms and splendid colors, were piled the clouds in all the western quarter.

Such of the crew as stopped to speak of it did not like at all the look of that sea and sky, and some stopped beside the skipper to say it, he leaning against the main rigging in the way he had the while he would be studying the weather signs; but he made no answer to the crew, to that or any other word they had this evening—except to Saul Haverick, and to him only when he came up from supper complaining of not feeling well.

He was one could drive his crew till they could not see for very weariness; but he was one could nurse them, too. "Go below and turn in," was his word to Saul, "and stay there till you feel better. Call me, Simon, if I'm not up," he then said to me. "I'll stand Saul's watch with you, if Saul is no better."

It was yet black night when I was called to go on watch, and, Saul Haverick still complaining, I went to call the skipper. But he was already up and had been, the watch before me said, for the better part of the night. I found him leaning over the gunnels of the wind'ard nest of dories when I went on deck, gazing out on a sea that was no longer oily-smooth, though smooth enough, too, what was to be seen of it, under the stars of a winter night.

I stood on the break and likewise looked about me. To anchor, and alone, lay the vessel, with but her riding-light to mark her in the dark; alone and quiet, with never a neighbor to hail us, nor a sound from any living thing whatever. The very gulls themselves were asleep; only the fores'l, swaying to a short sheet, would roll part way to wind'ard and back to loo'ard, but quiet as could be even then, except for the little tapping noises of the reef-points when in and out the belly of the canvas would puff full up and let down again to what little wind was stirring.

It was a perfect, calm night, but no calm day was to follow. "Wicked weather ahead," said Hugh Glynn, and came and stood beside me on the break. "A wicked day coming, but no help for it now till daylight comes to see our trawls to haul 'em." And, as one who had settled that in his mind, he said no more of it, but from mainm'st to weather rail he paced, and back again, and I took to pacing beside him.

A wonderful time, the night-watches at sea, for men to reveal themselves. Night and sky overhead and the wide ocean to your elbow—it drives men to thought of higher things. The wickedest of men—I have known them, with all manner of blasphemies befouling their lips by day, to become holy as little children in the watches of the night.

No blasphemer was Hugh Glynn, nor did the night hold terror for him; only as we paced the break together he spoke of matters that but himself and his God could know. It was hard to listen and be patient, though maybe it was as much of wonder as of impatience was taking hold of me as I listened.

"Do you never fear what men might come to think of you, Captain Glynn," I said, "confessing your very soul?"

"Ho, ho, that's it, is it?" He came to a sudden stop in our walking. "I should only confess the body—is that it, Simon Kippen? And, of course, when a man confesses to one thing of his own free will, you know there must be something worse behind? Is that it, Simon?" He chuckled beside me and, as if only to scandalize me, let his tongue run wilder yet.

His tales were of violations of laws such as it had been my religion to observe since I was a boy, and little except of the comic, ridiculous side of them all. The serious matters of life, if 'twas to judge by what he spoke to me that night, had small interest for him. But the queer power of the man! Had it been light where he could see me, I would have choked before ever I would let him hear me laugh; but he caught me smiling and straightened up, chuckling, to say: "Many other things you would smile at, too, Simon, if your bringing up would but allow the frost to thaw from your soul."

"And are reckless carryings-on and desperate chancing things to smile at?"

"O Simon, Simon, what a righteous man you're to be that never expects to see the day when no harbor this side of God's eternal sea will offer you the only safe and quiet mooring!"

Again I saw Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street, and remembering how she had spoken of his lonely home, I said: "No doubt a man, like a vessel, Captain Glynn, should have always a mooring somewhere. A wonder you never thought of marrying again?"

"I have thought of it."

"And with some one woman in mind?"

"It may be." He answered that, too, without a pause.

"And does she know?"

"It may be she knows. No knowing when they know, Simon. As men best understand the soul, so it is woman's best gift to understand the heart. But no fair play in me to ask her. I've had my great hour, and may not have it again with another. To offer the woman I have in mind anything less than a great love—it would be to cheat, Simon. No, no, no—it's not the kind of a man I am now, but the kind you are, Simon, should marry."

"It's not my kind that women like best, Captain," I said.

"There are women to like every kind, Simon, and almost any kind of a woman would like your kind, Simon, if you would only learn to be less ashamed of what should be no shame. And it is you, already in love, who——"

"Me—in love?" I was like a vessel luffing to escape a squall, he had come on me so quickly.

"There it is, Simon—the upbringing of you that would never own up to what you think only yourself know. Three weeks to sea now you've been with me, and never a gull you've seen skirling to the west'ard that your eyes haven't followed. By no mistake do you watch them flying easterly. And when last evening I said, 'To-morrow, boys, we'll swing her off and drive her to the west'ard—to the west'ard and Gloucester!' the leaping heart in you drove the blood to your very eyes. Surely that was not in sorrow, Simon?"

I made no answer.

Back and forth we paced, and talked as we paced, until the stars were dimming in the sky and the darkness fading from the sea. He stopped by the rail and stared, aweary-like, I thought, upon the waters.

"Simon, surely few men but would rather be themselves than anybody else that lives; but surely, too, no man sailing his own wide courses but comes to the day when he wishes he'd been less free in his navigation at times. You are honest and right, Simon. Even when you are wrong you are right, because for a man to do what he thinks is right, whether he be right or wrong, at the time, is to come to be surely right in the end. And it is the like of you, not yet aweary in soul or body, should mate with the women molded of God to be the great mothers."

"You have done much thinking of some matters, Captain," I said, not knowing what else to say.

"Alone at sea before the dawn—it is a wonderful hour for a man to cross-question himself, Simon; and not many nights of late years that I haven't seen the first light of dawn creeping up over the edge of the ocean. You marry Mary Snow, Simon."

He knew. What could I say? "I never thought to talk like this, Captain, to a living man." In the growing light we now stood plain to each other's sight. "I don't understand what made me," I said, and said it, doubtless, with a note of shame.

"It may be just as well at your age that you don't understand every feeling that drives you on, Simon. Our brains grow big with age, but not our hearts. No matter what made you talk to-night, Simon, you marry Mary Snow."

I shook my head, but opened my heart to him, nevertheless. "I haven't the clever ways of Saul Haverick."

"Simon, it's my judgment this night that Mary Snow will never marry Saul Haverick."

"I'm glad to hear you think that, Captain. 'Twould spoil her life—or any woman's."

"No, no," he said, quick-like. "Almost any woman's—yes; but not Mary Snow's—not altogether."

"And why?"

"Because she's too strong a soul to be spoiled of her life by any one man; because no matter what man she marries, in her heart will be the image, not of the man her husband is, but of the man she'd wish him to be, and in the image of that man of her fancy will her children be born. Women molded of God to be the mothers of great men are fashioned that way, Simon. They dream great dreams for their children's sake to come, and their hearts go out to the man who helps to make their dreams come true. If I've learned anything of good women in life, Simon, it is that. And, no saying, I may be wrong in that, too, Simon, but so far I've met no man who knows more of it than I to gainsay me. You marry Mary Snow, Simon, and she will bear you children who will bring new light to a darkening world."

The dawn was rolling up to us and the next on watch was on deck to relieve me; and the cook, too, with his head above the fo'c's'le hatch, was calling that breakfast was ready, and we said no more of that.

"Go for'ard, Simon," said Captain Glynn, "and have your breakfast. After breakfast we'll break out her anchor, and out dories and get that gear aboard afore it's too late. I'll go below and see how Saul's getting on."

With that he went into the cabin; but soon was back to take his seat at the breakfast table; but no word of Saul until we had done eating, and he standing to go up on deck. Then he said: "Saul says he is still too sick to go in the dory with you, Simon."

And to that I said: "Well, I've hauled a halibut trawl single-handed before, Captain Glynn, and I can do it again if need be."

He put on his woolen cap, and across the table he looked at me, and I looked hard at him.

"This will be no morning to go single-handed in a dory, Simon. Saul is not too sick, he says, to stand to the wheel and handle the vessel in my place. I will take his place along with you in the dory."

What he was thinking I could not say. His head was thrown back and his eyes looking out and down at me, as from the top of a far-away hill, and no more knowing what thoughts lay behind them than what ships lay beyond the horizon.

## IV

It was a blood-red sunrise and a sea that was making when we left the vessel, but nothing to worry over in that. It might grow into a dory-killing day later, but so far it was only what all winter trawlers have faced more days than they can remember.

We picked up our nearest buoy, with its white-and-black flag floating high to mark it, and as we did, to wind'ard of us we could see, for five miles it might be, the twisted lines of the dories stretching. Rising to the top of a sea we could see them, sometimes one and sometimes another, lifting and falling, and the vessel lifting and falling to wind'ard of them all.

Hugh Glynn took the bow to do the hauling and myself the waist for coiling, and it was a grand sight to see him heave in on that heavy gear on that December morning. Many men follow the sea, but not many are born to it. Hugh Glynn was. Through the gurdy he hauled the heavy lines, swinging forward his shoulders, first one and then the other, swaying from his waist and all in time to the heave of the sea beneath him, and singing, as he heaved, the little snatches of songs that I believe he made up as he went along.

As he warmed to his work he stopped to draw off the heavy sweater that he wore over his woolen shirt, and made as if to throw it in the bow of the dory. "But, no," he said, "it will get wet there. You put it on you, Simon, and keep it dry for me." He was a full size bigger than me in every way, and I put it on, over my cardigan jacket and under my oil jacket, and it felt fine and comfortable on me.

It came time for me to spell him on the hauling, but he waved me back. "Let be, let be, Simon," he said, "it's fine, light exercise for a man of a brisk morning. It's reminding me of my hauling of my first trawl on the Banks. Looking back on it, now, Simon, I mind how the bravest sight I thought I ever saw was our string of dories racing afore the tide in the sea of that sunny winter's morning, and the vessel, like a mother to her little boats, standing off and on to see that nothing happened the while we hauled and coiled and gaffed inboard the broad-backed halibut. All out of myself with pride I was—I that was no more than a lad, but hauling halibut trawls with full-grown Gloucester men on the Grand Banks! And the passage home that trip, Simon! Oh, boy, that passage home!"

Without even a halt in his heaving in of the trawls, he took to singing:

"It came one day, as it had to come—
I said to you 'Good-by.'
'Good luck,' said you, 'and a fair, fair wind'—
Though you cried as if to die;
Was all there was ahead of you
When we put out to sea;
But now, sweetheart, we're headed home
To the west'ard and to thee.

"So blow, ye devils, and walk her home—
For she's the able *Lucy Foster*.
The woman I love is waiting me,
So drive the *Lucy* home to Gloucester.
O ho ho for this heaven-sent breeze,
Straight from the east and all you please!
Come along now, ye whistling gales,
The harder ye blow the faster she sails—
O my soul, there's a girl in Gloucester!"

He stopped to look over his shoulder at me. "Simon, boy, I mind the days when there was no stopping the songs in me. Rolling to my lips o' themselves they would come, like foam to the crests of high seas. The days of a man's youth, Simon! All I knew of a gale of wind was that it stirred the fancies in me. It's the most wonderful thing will ever happen you, Simon."

"What is, skipper?"

"Why, the loving a woman and she loving you, and you neither knowing why, nor maybe caring."

"No woman loves me, skipper."

"She will, boy—never a fear."

He took to the hauling, and soon again to the singing:

"My lad comes running down the street,
And what says he to me?
Says he, 'O dadda, dadda,
And you're back again from sea!

"'And did you ketch a great big fish
And bring him home to me?
O dadda, dadda, take me up
And toss me high!' says he.

"My love looks out on the stormy morn,
Her thoughts are on the sea.
She says, ''Tis wild upon the Banks,'
And kneels in prayer for me.

"'O Father, hold him safe!" she prays,
'And——'

"There's one, Simon!" he called.

A bad sea he meant. They had been coming and going, coming and going, rolling under and past us, and so far no harm; but this was one more wicked to look at than its mates. So I dropped the coiling lines and, with the oar already to the becket in the stern, whirled the dory's bow head on. The sea carried us high and far and, passing, left the dory deep with water, but no harm in that so she was still right side up.

"A good job, Simon," said Hugh Glynn the while we were bailing. "Not too soon and not too late."

That was the first one. More followed in their turn; but always the oar was handy in the becket, and it was but to whirl bow or stern to it with the oar when it came, not too soon to waste time for the hauling but never, of course, too late to save capsizing; and bailing her out, if need be, when it was by.

Our trawl was in, our fish in the waist of the dory, and we lay to our roding line and second anchor, so we might not drift miles to loo'ard while waiting for the vessel to pick us up. We could see the vessel—to her hull, when to the top of a sea we rose together; but nothing of her at all when into the hollows we fell together.

She had picked up all but the dory next to wind'ard of us. We would be the last, but before long now she would be to us. "When you drop Simon and me, go to the other end of the line and work back. Pick Simon and me up last of all," Hugh Glynn had said to Saul, and I remember how Saul, standing to the wheel, looked down over the taffrail and said, "Simon and you last of all," and nodded his head as our dory fell away in the vessel's wake.

Tide and sea were such that there was no use trying to row against it, or we would not have waited at all; but we waited, and as we waited the wind, which had been southerly, went into the east and snow fell; but for not more than a half-hour, when it cleared. We stood up and looked about us. There was no vessel or other dory in sight.

We said no word to each other of it, but the while we waited further, all the while with a wind'ard eye to the bad little seas, we talked.

"Did you ever think of dying, Simon?" Hugh Glynn said after a time.

"Can a man follow the winter trawler long and not think of it at times?" I answered.

"And have you fear of it, Simon?"

"I know I have no love for it," I said. "But do you ever think of it, you?"

"I do—often. With the double tides working to draw me to it, it would be queer enough if now and again I did not think of it."

"And have you fear of it?"

"Of not going properly—I have, Simon." And after a little: "And I've often thought it a pity for a man to go and nothing come of his going. Would you like the sea for a grave, Simon?"

"I would not," I answered.

"Nor me, Simon. A grand, clean grave, the ocean, and there was a time I thought I would; but not now. The green grave ashore, with your own beside you—a man will feel less lonesome, or so I've often thought, Simon."

"I've often thought so," he went on, his eyes now on watch for the bad seas and again looking wistful-like at me. "I'd like to lie where my wife and boy lie, she to one side and the lad to the other, and rise with them on Judgment Day. I've a notion, Simon, that with them to bear me up I'd stand afore the Lord with greater courage. For if what some think is true—that it's those we've loved in this world will have the right to plead for us in the next—then, Simon, there will be two to plead for me as few can plead."

He stood up and looked around. "It is a bad sea now, but worse later, and a strong breeze brewing, Simon"; and drew from an inside pocket of his woolen shirt a small leather notebook. He held it up for me to see, with the slim little pencil held by little loops along the edges.

"'Twas hers. I've a pocket put in every woolen shirt I wear to sea so 'twill be close to me. There's things in it she wrote of our little boy. And I'm writing here something I'd like you to be witness to, Simon."

He wrote a few lines. "There, Simon. I've thought often this trip how 'tis hard on John Snow at his age to have to take to fishing again. If I hadn't lost Arthur, he wouldn't have to. I'm willing my vessel to John Snow. Will you witness it, Simon?"

I signed my name below his; and he set the book back in his inside pocket.

"And you think our time is come, skipper?" I tried to speak quietly, too.

"I won't say that, Simon, but foolish not to make ready for it."

I looked about when we rose to the next sea for the vessel. But no vessel. I thought it hard. "Had you no distrust of Saul Haverick this morning?" I asked him.

"I had. And last night, too, Simon."

"And you trusted him?"

"A hard world if we didn't trust people, Simon. I thought it over again this morning and was ashamed, Simon, to think it in me to distrust a shipmate. I wouldn't have believed it of any man ever I sailed with. But no use to fool ourselves longer. Make ready. Over with the fish, over with the trawls, over with everything but thirty or forty fathom of that roding line, and the sail, and one anchor, and the two buoys."

It was hard to have to throw back in the sea the fine fish that we'd taken hours to set and haul for; hard, too, to heave over the stout gear that had taken so many long hours to rig. But there was no more time to waste—over they went. And we took the two buoys—light-made but sound and tight half-barrels they were—and we lashed them to the risings of the dory.

"And now the sail to her, Simon."

We put the sail to her.

"And stand by to cut clear our anchorage!" I stood by with my bait knife; and, when he called out, I cut, and away we went racing before wind and tide; me in the waist, on the buoy lashed to the wind'ard side to hold her down, and he on the wind'ard gunnel, too, but aft, with an oar in one hand and the sheet of the sail in the other.

"And where now?" I asked, when the wind would let me.

"The lee of Sable Island lies ahead."

The full gale was on us now—a living gale; and before the gale the sea ran higher than ever, and before the high seas the flying dory. Mountains of slate-blue water rolled down into valleys, and the valleys rolled up into mountains again, and all shifting so fast that no man might point a finger and say, "Here's one, there's one!"—quick and wild as that they were.

From one great hill we would tumble, only to fall into the next great hollow; and never did she make one of her wild plunges but the spume blew wide and high over her, and never did she check herself for even the quickest of breaths, striving the while to breast up the side of a mountain of water, but the sea would roll over her, and I'd say to myself once again: "Now at last we're gone!"

We tumbled into the hollows and a roaring wind would drive a boiling foam, white as milk, atop of us; we climbed up the hills and the roaring wind would drive the solid green water atop of us. Wind, sea, and milk-white foam between them—they seemed all of a mind to smother us. These things I saw in jumps-like. Lashed to the wind'ard buoy I was by a length of roding line, to my knees in water the better part of the time, and busy enough with the bailing. There was no steady looking to wind'ard, such was the weight of the bullets of water which the wild wind drove off the sea crests; but a flying glance now and again kept me in the run of it.

I would have wished to be able to do my share of the steering, but only Hugh Glynn could properly steer that dory that day. The dory would have sunk a hundred times only for the buoys in the waist; but she would have capsized more times than that again only for the hand of him in the stern. Steady he sat, a man of marble, his jaw like a cliff rising above the collar of his woolen shirt, his two eyes like two lights glowing out from under his cap brim.

And yet for all of him I couldn't see how we could live through it. Once we were so terribly beset that, "We'll be lost carrying sail like this, Hugh Glynn!" I called back to him.

And he answered: "I never could see any difference myself, Simon, between being lost carrying sail and being lost hove to."

After that I said no more.

And so, to what must have been the wonder of wind and sea that day, Hugh Glynn drove the little dory into the night and the lee of Sable Island.

## V

We took in our sail and let go our anchor. Hugh Glynn looked long above and about him. "A clear night coming, Simon; and cold, with the wind backing into the no'west. We'll lay here, for big vessels will be running for this same lee to-night, and maybe a chance for us to be picked up with the daylight. Did I do well this day by you, Simon?"

"I'd be a lost man hours back but for you," I said, and was for saying more in praise of him, but he held up his hand.

"So you don't hold me a reckless, desperate sail carrier, Simon, never mind the rest." His eyes were shining. "But your voice is weary, Simon, and you're hungry, too, I know."

I was hungry and worn—terribly worn—after the day, and so told him.

"Then lie down and 'twill rest you, and for a time make you forget the hunger. And while you're lying down, Simon, I'll stand watch."

And I made ready to lie down, when I thought of his sweater I was wearing. I unbuttoned my oil jacket to get at it. "It's colder already, skipper, and you will be needing it."

"No, it is you will be needing it, Simon. Being on my feet, d'y see, I can thrash around and keep warm."

"But will you call me and take it if it grows too cold, skipper?"

"I'll call you when I want it—lie down now."

"A wonderful calm night, full as quiet as last, skipper," I said, "only no harm in this night—no gale before us on the morrow."

"No, Simon," he said—"naught but peace before us. But lie down you, boy."

"And you'll call me, skipper," I said, "when my watch comes?"

"I'll call you when I've stood my full watch. Lie down now."

I lay down, meaning to keep awake. But I fell asleep.

I thought I felt a hand wrapping something around me in the night, and I made to sit up, but a voice said, "Lie down, boy," and I lay down and went to sleep again.

When I awoke it was to the voices of strange men, and one was saying: "He will be all right now."

I sat up. I was still in the dory, and saw men standing over me; and other men were looking down from a vessel's side. Ice was thick on the rail of the vessel.

It was piercing cold and I was weak with the fire of the pains running through my veins, but, remembering, I tried to stand up. "Hsh-h, boy!" they said, "you are all right," and would have held me down while they rubbed my feet and hands.

I stood up among them, nevertheless, and looked for Hugh Glynn. He was on the after thwart, his arms folded over the gunnel and his forehead resting on his arms. His woolen shirt was gone from him. I looked back and in the waist of the dory I saw it, where they had taken it off me; and the sail of the boat he had wrapped around me, too; and his woolen mitts.

I lifted his head to see his face. If ever a man smiled, 'twas he was smiling as I looked. "Skipper! O skipper!" I called out; and again: "O skipper!"

One of the men who had been rubbing my feet touched my shoulder. "Come away, boy; the voice o' God called him afore you."

And so Hugh Glynn came to his green grave ashore; and so I came home to marry Mary Snow; and in the end to father the children which may or may not grow great as he predicted. But great in the eyes of the world they could become, greater than all living men, it might be, and yet fall far short in our eyes of the stature of the man who thought that 'twas better for one to live than for two to die, and that one not to be himself.

Desperate he was and lawbreaking, for law is law, whosoever it bears hard upon; but the heart was warm within him. And if my children have naught else, and it is for their mother and me to say, the heart to feel for others they shall have; and having that, the rest may follow or not, as it will; which would be Hugh Glynn's way of it, too, I think.

# VII

## DRAWN SHUTTERS

No sooner had the *Midnight* let go her anchor in the cove than a door opened in the topmost little house on the rocks. An old man came down to the beach, with some difficulty launched his boat, and presently was alongside.

The skipper himself took the old man's painter. "Come aboard, Mister Morton," he said, heartily.

"Thankee, Captain, but not this mornin'." He hesitated perceptibly ere he put the question. "No word, Captain?" There was more of inquiry in the old man's eyes than in what came from his faltering lips—worn old eyes, in which was a pitiable plea for hope. "No word yet o' the *Pallas,* Captain Proctor?"

"None yet, Mister Morton."

"Wh-h-h—" the sigh shook the old body. "Such a fine, able vessel as she was, too. My boy thought he was made when he got her, Captain."

"And well he might, Mister Morton."

"And the proud man I was when I saw him sail out o' Carouge Cove that day. I followed him across the bay to old Weebald, you mind, in my little jack, Captain, though 'twas a risin' gale and I had to lay to Lark Harbor for two days afore it moderated so I could put back. But the grand American schooners, they'll make easy work of this, I says, and warn't I proud to think of him sailin' that able American vessel! The first Bay of Islands boy that ever went master of a Gloucesterm'n. They'll few o' 'em show *him* the course to Gloucester, I says. Aye, I did. And"—again the eyes dulled—"and no word o' him since, you say, Captain? Sure there's no word?"

"Well, not when we left home, Mister Morton, though we didn't come straight from Gloucester. We stopped at St. Pierre on the way. Maybe Captain Murray, who's just come to anchor below, has some word. He left home two days after we did."

"Did he, now? Two days? Yes, yes. I'll drop below and see him. Thankee, Captain, but not this mornin'." Aye, I could one time, and dance as I drinked, but my bitters be'n't what they were to me. No, my bitters don't taste right now; but thankee, Captain, for all that."

The old man reseated himself in his little boat, resumed his oars, and was off. Captain Proctor watched him until he had reached the side of Murray's vessel.

"There, he's aboard. He'll ask the same question, and Murray'll give him the same answer. Nobody with the heart to tell him the truth."

"And what *is* the truth, Captain?"

The truth? The whole story? Well, you must go back some little way for that—back to six weeks yesterday, when three of us were on this very spot ready to leave for Gloucester—Wesley Marrs in the *Lucy Foster,* old Morton's son in the *Pallas,* and myself in this one. We were all of one tonnage, and there was rivalry between us to see who'd take the biggest load of herring. Each of us'd took on both holdsful of salt herring, and I know I thought that for our tonnage we all had enough. Well, that night the three of us met at a dance, and after the dance there was supper and a few drinks of smuggled stuff. There was more or less talking, too, you know, before the girls, and somebody remarked how deep the vessels were loaded—too deep for that time of the year. We were, as a matter of fact, pretty deep; but Wesley said: "Deep hell! the *Lucy* could take another two hundred and fifty barrels and not know she had 'em."

"There are people in the world who are made of meanness and envy. There was a fellow there who was quite a little man when the American skippers weren't around. He'd been in the rear row for some time, but now he comes to the front again. He looks across at Wesley. "That's big talk, Captain Marrs. Could—you say you could, but *would* you?"

"Would? Yes, and *will,*" fires back Wesley. "Got two hundred and fifty barrels handy, have you?"

"I will have 'em alongside in the morning."

"Then in the afternoon they'll be aboard," says Wesley.

"I'll have 'em there. That's certainly something *like* a load of herring," goes on this chap. "I wonder now if any of our people here would—" and looks over to young Morton.

"What's that," asks Morton, "about carryin' a load of herrin'?"

The fellow repeated what he'd said, and young Morton flares right up. Bring him another two hundred and fifty barrels and see what he'd do with them! He had double reasons for it. There was the girl that he was trying to work to windward of, and making good weather of it, too, naturally—a husky, good-looking young skipper—and this the night before he was to leave on what was generally reckoned a hard trip to Gloucester at this time of year. And then, too, he was the first man out of this place ever went master of a first-class American fisherman. And the natives hereabout were that proud of him! "H-m!" they'd say, "and so they has to come here to wild Newf'undland for skippers as well as men?" and could hardly keep from shouting, some of 'em, at our fellows as they went by. And maybe 'twas from knowing something of that spirit that Wesley Marrs was so quick to make his boast.

Anyway, whatever Wesley Marrs says drunk he'll make good sober. So when our friend was there with any quantity of salt herring next morning, Wesley took his two hundred and fifty barrels. And you may be sure the *Lucy* did set something scandalous in the water when she'd got 'em on deck—a good plank deeper than any vessel leaving Bay of Islands that month.

"I misdoubt you'll ever get her home, Captain Marrs, if you meets heavy weather," was the cheerful word of one native.

"No?" says Wesley. "No? Well, we'll see," and goes around with an auger, plugging up her regular scuppers and boring new ones under the top rail. The natives couldn't keep their admiration to themselves when they saw that.

Abel Morton listened to that talk for a while, and then for the honor of the Bay of Islands—and the thought of the girl, too, I guess—he said he'd stand by what he said the night before. "What one man could do another man could do," and also went around plugging up the regular scuppers and boring holes under his top rail.

Tried to stop him, did Wesley. "You don't need to do that, Abel," he says, "just because you had a glass of liquor in you last night."

"Why not, as well as you?" says Abel. "Why can't a Newf'undlander do what any American-born can do?"

"Why, no reason at all why he can't, gen'rally speaking, if he's got the right stuff in him, which I know you have; but I'll tell you why, and no discredit to you, Abel, that in this partic'lar case you can't. I'm some years older than you and I've been handling big fishermen ten times as long. I've been carrying sail since I was a boy 'most. I know what a vessel c'n do. I know what no man learns except by hard experience, and then he's lucky if he lives to brag about it afterward. I know just how far a vessel c'n roll down before she rolls down to stay. And partic'larly do I know what the *Lucy* c'n do. You don't learn that in one year, or two years, or five years of driving. And you're damn lucky if, after you've learned it, you don't get lost yourself—yourself and your vessel and all hands—some day, experimenting further. And more than that, Abel, I've been making passages from here to Gloucester for eight or ten winters now. I know every foot of the road, and no credit to me, while this is your first passage as master."

"Maybe so," says Abel Morton to that, "but I've been hand for many a passage."

"Maybe you have," says Wesley; and through it all he was good-tempered as could be. I mind how he looked, standing with one foot on the quarter-rail and smiling, though we all knew it might be no smiling matter soon. "Maybe you have, Abel," says he, smiling over at young Morton, "but when you're master and the whole responsibility on you alone, you get to thinking a little deeper. So if you take my advice, and no harm meant, you won't take aboard that deck-load o' herrin'."

"You put ashore your deck-load and I won't take mine aboard," says Abel.

"No," says Wesley. "I've shipped mine—it is in the papers now—and what I've shipped I'll take home or wash overboard—or," he added after a little pause, "go down with."

"Well, maybe I'll go down with mine, too."

"Maybe you will, too," says Wesley; "but what good will that do?"

So they put out. I warn't quite ready to sail—had to reeve a new main-sheet—and I remember I cast off—we were all three tied together—first young Morton's line, and then Wesley's.

"Good-by!" calls out Morton to me.

"Fair wind," I answered.

"I'll see you in Gloucester," was Wesley's word—"that's if all goes well," he added. Wesley was always like that, adding little last words after a little study. He'd lived too long on the sea, I s'pose, to make the mistake of ever saying he'd surely do this or cert'nly do that. But young Morton warn't that way. He was drunk with the pride of sailing the *Pallas* out of the Bay of Islands, where all his old chums could see him, and his father, too—to say nothing of the girl he was in love with. To the dock she'd come to see him off. And there he kissed her and hopped aboard the *Pallas.* "Good-by, dad," he hollered back to the old man. "I'll be back in a month, and maybe be in Gloucester in three or four days; certainly in a week with anything like a fair chance. Maybe somebody'll be showing you a Gloucester paper with an account of the trip in it before I get back."

They sailed out, and I followed next day. And, of course, what further happened to them I didn't learn till afterward. But they had it out from the beginning. They were no sooner clear of the bay, hardly into the gulf, with Morton maybe a mile or two in the lead, than they drove into a westerly gale. And all the way down this tough west coast to Cabot's Strait they had it. Both of 'em had on more sail than they should, more than was any mortal use to 'em; but after two days and two nights together, sometimes so close they could hail each other, they warn't either of 'em taking any of it in. Abel Morton ought to have, because—I meant to have said before—the *Pallas,* while as fine and able-looking a vessel as almost any man would want to see, was what's called a crooked vessel. Her deck wasn't flat enough, and she was too low in the waist—the kind that would fill up amidship and sometimes not get rid of it in time, while the *Lucy's* flat as a ball-room floor. That was the biggest reason why we didn't want to see Abel load too deep. But you couldn't tell that proud young Captain there was any fault with the *Pallas*—he'd eat you alive.

Well, Abel held on, the gulf behind them, till they butted into the Atlantic and into that hard south-easter, the hardest gale in maybe two winters. I met it two days later, and though I warn't loaded near so deep as Wesley and Abel, I was glad enough to put into Sydney for a harbor. And I warn't carrying any whole mains'l, either. So you can imagine what weather they made of it. Loaded deep with salt herring a vessel might's well be fastened with a long rod to the bottom of the ocean. There's no lift or heave to her. The sea breaking over her gives her no chance at all. Well, the bother in a case like that—a logey cargo, a big sea, a gale of wind, and a press of canvas—is that you're most sure to get caught sooner or later and hove down; and a vessel hove down with an overload of salt herring is in a bad way. Gen'rally she don't leave you long in doubt. That's what must have happened to the *Pallas* with her crooked deck. Up to five o'clock that particular afternoon, after twenty-four hours in the south-easter, those on the *Lucy Foster* could easily make out the *Pallas* astern. She'd hung on well up to that time—Wesley didn't pass her till they were clear of the Newf'undland coast; but now coming on dark this day the *Pallas* began to drop back, and soon after, when she'd put up her lights, they could hardly be seen from the *Lucy*. Now all this time they'd been having desp'rate times aboard the *Lucy*. There was forty times they thought she was going, but somehow or other, just like her, she'd come up just in time. Then the deck-load of two hundred and fifty barrels began to loosen up under the battering. Now it would have been a great blessing all around if the deck-load had gone—to all but the owners, that is, and even they'd rather lose the deck-load than the vessel and the big load in the hold below, not to speak of the crew. But Wesley wouldn't let 'em go. "No," he says, "I'll get 'em home. Nobody'll have it to say in Gloucester we got scared so soon. I know Abel. After all that talk in the Bay of Islands, he'll try and hang on to *his* deck-load long's he can." And with lines about them Wesley and his gang went into the swash and put extra lashings to the barrels on deck. By the time they got that job done 'twas good and dark, and they could barely see the staggering red light of the *Pallas* astern. After that they had no time for anybody but themselves. The worst of it was on them then. And it was well Wesley did get his deck-load double-griped. But tough as it was on the *Lucy* it must have been tougher still on the vessel that was lurching along behind them. And thinking of that, after two terrible seas had all but finished the *Lucy*, Wesley looked back for the lights of the *Pallas* again.

Wesley looked long to where he had seen her port light before. He brushed the spray from his eyes and looked again. No light could he see. He sent men into the rigging—he was lashed to the wheel himself—and they looked back over the water. No light anywhere—nothing but what looked like a patch of foam.

And, though he dreaded it, Wesley hove to his vessel. "Suppose she isn't gone, and suppose she's not hove to and he keeps her goin', he'll cert'nly have the laugh on Wesley Marrs, but what of that? We may not be a bit of use, but we'll wait here till morning."

Which they did. But no *Pallas*, not even a bit of wreckage. Like a rock she must have gone down, as a vessel loaded like that and caught wrong is bound to. Anyway, Wesley was satisfied she was gone, and next day went on his way, and after another ten days of head winds battled into Gloucester.

Is she gone? Of course we all know she's gone. Six weeks ago that was. Her list was published in the Gloucester papers just before we left, but nobody here will tell that to old Morton. He still thinks she was blown out to sea or maybe clear back into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where she is now drifting around dismantled and unable to help herself, but still afloat, and the boy that left here six weeks back still walking her battered hulk.

The master of the *Midnight* glanced down toward Murray's vessel. From there his eyes roved toward the little old house perched high up on the rocks, and back then to Murray's vessel, where now old Morton could be seen shoving off his boat. The old man made but feeble progress, and the tide set him over toward the *Midnight*. Clearly he was very tired, but when he called out to Captain Proctor there was a more hopeful ring to his words: "Captain Murray says 'tis possible the *Pallas* was drove clear back through the gulf to the Labrador coast, drove ashore like, and they might be there now, he says. Hard livin' on that coast, Captain, in winter."

"It must be."

"Aye, but they has their herrin', and what fresh fish they can ketch. Abel will make out."

"I hope so, Mister Morton."

The old man rowed on to the beach, where, after drawing his boat above high-tide mark, he laboriously made the ascent of the rocks. Now they could see him, and again he would disappear beyond some intervening shack in the winding path. Neighbors were evidently hailing him on the way, for here and there he would halt and, half turning, nod his head, say a few words, of further hope doubtless, and pass along. Twice he paused, apparently for breath.

Arrived at his house he did not at once enter, but turned and gazed out over the bay. He stood so until the door opened and his old wife appeared; and together they stood on the flat rock that served for a doorstep and gazed over the water. It gave one a shiver to see their old gray heads bared to the cold winter air.

Not until the old woman clutched him by the arm did he turn his face from the sea, and even then he returned to it, sweeping his thin arm toward the north-west with hopeful emphasis. She bent her head to his ear then, and evidently asked a disturbing question, for he dropped his arm and shook his head, whereat, stepping heavily, she went within the door. The old man lingered for one more long look across the bay and out toward the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Then he, too, went within.

The master of the *Midnight* sighed heavily. "Isn't that tough? The old woman hasn't his faith, you see. But he'll go on hoping and praying, and none of us with courage to tell him. Maybe 'twould've been better to tell him."

As he spoke a neighbor was seen to stop at the door of the house on the hill and knock. The old man came to the door. The neighbor handed him a newspaper and was about to make off, but the old man called after him. The neighbor opened up the paper, pointed hurriedly to something in it and rushed away. The old man gazed after him and then at the paper, before he closed the door. "He can't read," commented the master of the *Midnight,* "but his wife can. God! she'll get it first and have to tell him—what we might have told him before!"

In perhaps an hour the door of the little shack reopened. It was the old woman who came out. With some effort, for the wind was high, she closed all the shutters, and without further look around, stepped within the door again.

Presently another woman, a younger woman this, was seen to climb the winding path and stop at the door. The master of the *Midnight* unconsciously bent over the rail. "See now—the poor girl!"

After some hesitation the young woman knocked. Again she knocked. And yet once more. No answer coming, she rapped on one of the closed shutters, and still receiving no response, stood on her toes in an effort to peek through the diamond-shaped opening in the shutter. She was not tall enough for that, and, stepping back, again she essayed the door. She rattled the latch; but no word.

Throwing back her head, she stared anew at the blank walls; but nothing coming of that, she made a despairing gesture with her hands, resettled her shawl about her shoulders, and came away. Neighbors, from behind jarred doors, peered out on her, but none spoke to her; and so still was it that from the deck of the *Midnight* they could hear her heels clicking as she hurried down the rocky pathway.

# VIII

## DAN MAGEE: WHITE HOPE

THAT night in the fo'c's'le Tom was telling them how he got the word of the Jeffries-Johnson fight.

"I sights her smoke to the west'ard, the sun just risin'. But it came to me that mebbe a great steamer like her wouldn't like it to be held up by a couple o' Grand Bank trawlers in a dory, an' I mentions that to Jack, there, but Jack says: 'You know how they all want to know aboard the vessel, 'specially the cook.'"

The cook looked up to say dejectedly: "I'd ha' forgiven you."

"Jack handed me his oil jacket for a signal o' distress, an' I lashes it to the blade of an oar an' lashes th' oar to a for'ard thwart an' sits down an' waits.

"Along she comes, an' she cert'nly was the grand sight comin'. The len'th an' height of her, and a wave to her bow an' stern would swamp a dory! An' her bridge! Miles away 'twas high as some flyin' thing. On she comes a-roarin'—twenty-six knots, no less. An' almost atop of us she stops. An' I looks up at her, an' a gold-braided lad in blue he leans over the side rail o' th' bridge an' he says: 'What's wrong with you chaps?'

"An' I looks up an' says: 'Who won?'

"An' he says: 'What d'y'mean—who won?'

"An' I says: 'God, man! where you been the last few days ashore? Who won th' fight?'

"A couple other gold-braided lads'd joined the first, an' behind them four or five rail-polishers was bobbin' up an' down. An' then came a fat-whiskered lad an' bustles all the others out o' his way, an' one o' the others hands him a little megaphone, an' he leans over the rail an' he says: 'You Yankee beggars, do I understand that you're holdin' up a ship of our clawss, and we, bearin' the roy'l mails, to ask who won a bloody prize-fight?'

"An' I says: 'Ferget y'ur class an' y'ur roy'l mails—who won th' fight?'

"There was a couple o' hundred o' passengers mebbe by this time along the top rail—men an' women, in night-dresses an' bath-robes the women, the men in Chinese trousers they looked like to me. An' a lad in a blue one of 'em he sings out: 'There's sporting blood for you!' an' he grabs another lad in a pink one an' says: 'Look—those two down there want to know who won the fight'; an' then sings out to us: 'Say, you're all right, you two!' An' just then the whiskered one on the bridge, he sings out—what was it he said, Jack?"

Jack quoted: "'Will the first-cabin passengers understand that I am thoroughly capable of carrying on all the necessary conversation with these people in regard to this matter?'"

"An' I was gettin' mad, an' I says: 'To blazes with y'ur necessary conversation, you pot-bellied loafer—who won th' fight?' An' at that the passenger that'd first butted in he makes a megaphone of his hands an' he sings out: 'Johnson!'

"'Johnson?' I says—'Johnson?' an' reaches back to find somethin' t' heave at him. I was goin' to heave a cod at him, but Jack says: 'Don't waste that on him,' an' digs me out an' old gray hake, an' I holds it by the tail an' I says: 'Say, you, you in the blue Chinese trousers, who'd you say won?' an' he says: 'Why, Johnson.'

"'You glue-eyed squid!' I says, an' scales th' old hake up at him, an' he dodges, but his chum in pink he didn't have time an' it ketches him fair, an' 'What in thunder's that thing!' he yells, an' takes to hoppin' up an' down an' wipin' the hake scales off his chin.

"An' the lad in blue sings out: 'Say, you, you oughter be in a big league with that arm o' yours,' an' he rushes inside the house an' comes out with a bunch of papers twisted together an' throws 'em over the side, an' Jack an' me we picks 'em up an' smooths 'em out on a thwart, an' there 'twas in letters six inches high—black letters, too—'JOHNSON WINS!' an' that's them the cook's readin' to himself now."

Tom stopped, and he who was called Professor said: "No doubt you would have wagered all you possessed if you had been home instead of out here."

"I wouldn't 'a' minded that. But Jeffries licked by a nigger! What's the white race comin' to? Say—say, but I wisht good old John L. in his prime'd been there to Reno—or Dan Magee."

Every one there, of course, knew all about the great John L. Sullivan, but there were two, both of course new to the vessel, who before this night had never heard of Dan Magee. One being from Fortune Bay, Tom was expecting no better of him; but the other (and he called Professor because of his book learning), and living in Boston, in Boston where they used to nourish champion fighters!

"But there is no record of a Dan Magee who was a heavyweight champion," argued Professor.

"A good thing for a lot of 'em there ain't," snapped Tom. "JOHNSON!!—*Johnson!*—Johnson——"

"I bet twenty to fifteen on Jeffries before we left Gloucester." This was from the cook, who, having read all about the fight, was now mixing a pan of bread, with his sad eyes directed to a deck beam. "Yes, twenty to—Cæsar Zippicus!" he brought his first down *bff!* in the lump of dough. "And I left ten more —I just remember—with Billy Mills to bet for me at the same odds."

Professor, lying in a lower bunk, took the trouble to roll over and say: "And why did you do that?"

"Why? Why?" The cook glared at the lower bunk. "You people—Cæsar Zippicus!" and, raising the bread pan high above his head, he brought it down smash atop of the galley-locker. Whang!

The cook looked ashamed. "I just remember I left another twenty with Jerry McCarty to place on Jeffries, too," he explained.

"Never mind, cook," said Tom, "you wouldn't 'a' lost nothing if it'd been Dan Magee."

"To blazes with you and Dan Magee!" whooped the cook.

"And that's what I says, too, cook." This was from Fortune Bay. "I been hearin' more o' Dan Magee this night! It's Dan Magee this an' Dan Magee that. And what did ever the man do?"

"Do?" Tom held a reverential hand high. "A book wouldn't tell th' half Dan did. Where's Jack?"

"Gone for'ard."

"Too bad—if Jack Ferris wasn't aft playin' cribbage with the skipper in the cabin, you'd hear a few things more of Dan Magee. But he'll be for'ard by'n'by for his turnin'-in mug-up, an' then——"

And by and by Jack came. "They're castin' doubt on Dan Magee," declared Tom to his dory-mate. "Tell him about the time he licked th' seven p'licemen in Saint Johns or about that time in Soorey."

Jack glanced at the clock.

"There might be time for the Souris fight. We were chasing mackerel in the *Tubal Cain,* Josh Bradley's vessel," said Ferris, "on the Cape shore, and a lively southeaster coming on one day, the skipper said he guessed he'd run into Souris to let it blow by. And as we'd been up three nights owling, after we dropped anchor all hands turned in for a good sleep.

"Late in the afternoon somebody sings out, 'Supper!' and I woke up. Looking across the cabin, I saw Dan awake, too, sitting on the locker, with his slipshods to one side and his rubber boots to the other. He was casting an eye now to one and now to the other, when he looks up and sees me. 'What d'y'say, Jackie boy?' says Dan. 'Will we slide into our slipshods and go for'ard for supper, or will we haul on our rubber boots and go ashore and eat like a pair of tourists and look the place over? What d'y'say?'

"We hadn't much of a cook that summer. He'd come off a yacht and was everlastingly making potted mackerel, which he *could* make good; but a pity nobody'd over told him fishermen don't go ketching fish to be always eating 'em. And so I said: 'Me for ashore.'

"So we get into our rubber boots, hoist a dory over the side, and we're shoving off when the skipper, who we thought we'd left asleep, sticks his head up the cabin companionway and sings out: 'Where you two bound?'

"'We thought,' says Dan, 'we'd be rowing a few miles out to sea and back by way of limbering up our slack muscles.'

"'There's some people I expect'd bust wide open if they wasn't allowed to be smart,' says Captain Josh. 'I don't know but what I'll go ashore with you,' and he threw a mug of coffee into himself and jumps in and we start off.

"Suddenly Dan stops rowing. 'Isn't this September?' says Dan, and the skipper says yes. 'And a Monday?' asks Dan, and the skipper stops and thinks for a moment and says yes it was. 'And the first Monday?' asks Dan. 'Yes,' says the skipper, 'but what in tarnation of it?' 'Nothing,' says Dan, 'only that if we were home it would be Labor Day.' And the skipper says: 'Well, what o' *that?*' 'Nothing,' says Dan, 'only it'd be a holiday and all hands celebrating if we were to anchor in some port ashore.'

"'But Labor Day ain't no holiday in this country,' says the skipper.

"'No,' says Dan, 'but we c'n make a holiday of it.'

"'I don't know about that,' says the skipper. 'If it moderates at all, I cal'late to be pullin' out by daybreak.'

"'Sure, and we c'n have a celebration that'll reverber-r-ate in history by then,' says Dan.

"Now, Dan was a great reader. He'd lie in his bunk of a night when he had no watch to stand and he'd read the morning up sometimes, and now when he starts rowing again he starts talking about things he'd read.

"'I used to read about the holidays that some countries have,' says Dan, 'but I never believed it till I was in a vessel running salt fish to Cadiz one time. And the ship-loads o' salt fish they consume in that country, 'twould amaze you. But one night layin' in Cadiz harbor a big whale of a steamer cut into us, and all the topside planking she left of us to starb'd not even this new cook of ours—and God knows he's savin' enough of the raw material!—he couldn't have started a galley fire with it. We had to run her up on the railway and calk her, and after that 'twas the carpenters—nine weeks in all—and 'twas great opportunities we had to study the customs of the country. And there was a country for you! Every once in a quick while a holiday. And the days they did work no one breaking his neck to get the work done. 'Twas proof to me they must be people o' genius to get ahead at all. But then they do say the people that does the least work has the most genius, the most imagination; and imagination, they say, is the first qualification of genius, and too much work it kills the imagination. What d'y'think o' that doctrine, skipper?' says Dan.

"'I don't know nothing about imagination,' says the skipper, 'but I alwuz notices that them that does the least work c'n get off the most hot air.'

"Just then we bump into the dock, where the skipper, without even waiting to see the painter made fast, hurries up toward the street.

"'There he goes,' says Dan, 'lookin' for—what they call 'em, now?—affinities. And if he only had a little taste in the matter! There's people, they say, that all vessels look alike to—sharp-built and round-bowed, light-sparred and heavy. And he's that way with women. One looks just like any other to him. The gray-headed old rat, he has sons as old as me or you at home, Jack, and there's the widow Simmons in Gloucester with two lodging-houses at the head o' the harbor. He's courting her, too.'

"'From what I hear, Dan,' says I, 'the widow is able for him.'

"At the head of the dock was a lobster factory with a pile of boiled lobsters under a shed half as high as our masthead. 'Here's our supper, boys,' says Dan, and we go up to a man and ask how much for lobsters, and he says: 'Help yourselves for fifty cents a dozen.' And we help ourselves. I had one dozen and Dan two. 'And couldn't we get a little drop o' something to follow after these red gentry?' asks Dan, and the man calls a boy, and Dan gives the boy a five-dollar bill, and when the boy comes back with a dozen pint bottles of English ale, he tells him to keep the change, the ale looked so good to him.

"He had nine bottles and I had three, and 'That's what I call a decent little lunch,' says Dan, 'and it begins to feel more like a holiday; and how is it with you, Jackie-boy?'

"I said I felt better, too, and we headed for the main street. By the time we got to the top of the hill—we'd hove-to here and there along the way, of course, with a little sociable drink in each to leave a good name behind us—and by now Dan said he could feel his side-lights burning bright; and as he said it we came abreast of a place with a window all of red glass, to port, and another, all green glass, to starboard. And over the door, shining out from a square box of a lantern, was the sign 'Snug Harbor!'

"'Hard-a-lee!' says Dan, and we tacked across the street and fetched up all-standing in front of the door. 'It's a great thing, isn't it, boy, to have a vessel that answers her helm?' says Dan, and leads the way in.

"The first room had a bar running the length of it. Gay times were going on in back somewhere, but, of course, we had to stop and buy a drink or two here by way of showing our good intentions. There was one man behind the bar; but before we could order, another fellow leaves a group near the window and goes behind, too. 'What's your name, mate?' says this one to Dan.

"'I'm Dan Magee o' Skibbaree,' says Dan, and leaps a yard into the air and knocks his heels together, and when he comes down pulls a bill from his roll and throws it on the bar.

"'I thought so. I'm from Skibbaree myself. I knew your father.'

"'Then you're from a place I never heard of before this last minute,' says Dan. 'But if you did know my father you knew a good man, a better man than ever you were—or will be,' says Dan, 'and if you want to dispute it 'tis his son will prove it to you. And if you think you can come any of your come-all-ye's over me, you're mistaken. I'll be thanking you for the change of that ten-dollar bill,' says Dan.

"'A ten-dollar bill?' says the bartender, and opens one hand and says: 'Why, no—see—a dollar bill.'

"'You don't tell me now!' says Dan, and reaches over and with a twist of his fingers opens the bartender's other hand, and there was the ten-dollar bill. And he takes it and tucks it away, and doing that he lets him have another look at the roll of bills he had with him.

"'My private opinion of you,' says Dan, 'I'd hate publicly to express it, 'specially in the presence of these honorable gentlemen here,' and he points to the four or five hard-looking tickets, who had left the window and were now crowding up close. 'But you don't want to be making the mistake of thinking because a man rolls a bit in the wind that he's carrying more sail than he ought. I've seen 'em, lad, with their hatches under; but let your wheel fly and up they'd come like a spinning top. It's the ballast, lad, the ballast. Don't make any mistake—if I feel like swinging all I got, the ballast's there to hold me up to it,' and with that he turns and drives his foot through the swinging-doors and into the next room with almost a flying leap. I stops to pay for the drinks and then follows Dan; but before I got through I heard one of the loafers say: 'And did you see that wild man's pile?' And I says to myself: 'If we get out of here alive, we're lucky.'

"The other room was a big room with sand on the floor, a bar and a barmaid to one side, and a counter to the other side with a man behind it opening oysters. There were small tables at one end and men and women sitting to them, drinking. The men were mostly seafaring hoboes, foolish lumpers, and deck-swabs—from off steamers, most likely. There was a man to the bar, and I didn't see who he was at first, but Dan spotted him right away. 'Will you look at our bold skipper!' whispers Dan —'and his wife not buried a year yet.' I takes another look and sees that so it was, and that he was talking a fourteen-knot clip to the barmaid.

"'Good evening, Captain,' says Dan. The Skipper turns, screws up his face, says 'Howdy' at last, and turns to the barmaid again.

"We were for passing on to the next room, where the dancing and piano-playing were; but there'd been the noise from the room we'd just left of a bunch of men coming in off the street and stopping just long enough for a round of drinks, and now they were coming through the swinging doors; and 'Did you see 'm hit 'm that last one?' one was saying, and 'Two rounds,' says another—'not enough to exercise Alf.'

"In front of the crowd was a whale of a fellow in a red sweater and a little cap atop of his head, and beside him was our short-change bartender friend and behind him a dozen men, among 'em the same half a dozen tough lads we'd already seen out front before.

"The big prize-fighter swings himself across the floor as if nobody else was living just then except to wait on him. 'A mug of your best, Daisy, dear,' he says to the barmaid; and, hearing that, the skipper whips around with a sour face, but he takes another look at the bruiser and whips back again.

"We could see the couples floating by the glass doors opening into the next room, and that's where Dan and myself were bound, and where we'd have got to, only the bartender's voice stops us. 'Say, you,' he calls out, 'how'd you like to put the gloves on and have a go with little Alf, here?' Dan didn't stop. '*You!*' yells the bartender—'I mean you, you big Gloucesterm'n!'

"Dan turned then. 'What's that?'

"'How'd you like to put on the gloves with Alf, here? There's a nice little bit of a ring across the way.' The big fellow himself wasn't even looking at Dan. He was elbowing the skipper to one side to get closer to the barmaid. The skipper was looking riled.

"'Why should I?' asks Dan. 'I've no quarrel with him.'

"'No, you big stiff; but if it was me, you would. You're Dan Magee of Skibbaree, are you? Why don't you leap into the air now and knock your heels together and say that to Alf? Or does his being the Soorey Giant make a difference?'

"'Hang you and your Soorey Giants!' says Dan.

"'Alf! Alf! Did y' hear 'im?' hollers the bartender. And at that a man, a fair-sized man, too, jumps into the middle of the floor and says: 'Don't you ago botherin' wi' him, Alfie—I'll take care of 'im.' He has a red sweater, too, and a little cap at the top of his head, and he takes a couple of fancy steps and spars with his hands, and by and by steps in and gives Dan a poke. And Dan he squints down at this lad and says, 'What's ailing you, man?' and the boxing chap he dashes in and pokes Dan again, and everybody laughs. But before they were done laughing, Dan, who'd never had a boxing-glove on in his life, he slaps out with his left paw and ketches the fancy boxer one on the side of his chin, and he doesn't stop falling backward till he fetches up between our skipper and the Souris Giant.

"'Alf!' he gasps, and the Souris Giant looks around to see who did it, and he spots Dan. 'Ho, ho!' he says—'ho!' and they all push back their chairs and tables to give him room. And he keeps looking at Dan and then steps into the clear space and fiddles around and measures his distance and lets go, and it ketches Dan fair on the chest and sends him back half a dozen feet. And as he does that somebody hits me one behind the ear and down I go. And somebody else said, 'He's one of 'em, too,' and reaches for the skipper, and down he comes, too, and the pair of us stay over to the corner where they'd knocked us and look on.

"The big fellow dances away and shapes up for Dan again. He reaches for Dan and ketches him fair again on the chest, and back goes Dan and begins to look foolish, and they all laugh and cheer, the women, too, and of the women the barmaid loudest of all. And 'He's Dan Magee o' Skibbaree!' says our old friend the bartender, and you couldn't hear a word then for laughing. And at that Dan springs a yard into the air and lets a roar out of him. 'Yes,' says he, 'I'm Dan Magee o' Skibbaree!' and comes charging across the floor. The big fellow sets himself, and when he gets Dan right he lets go. It was like hitting the big bass drum in a parade when he lands on Dan's chest. But this time Dan was coming full tilt, and he keeps on coming and makes a swipe with his left paw, and down goes Mr. Soorey Giant. But he jumps up and comes on, bellowing, and he swings, and Dan lets him swing while he reaches out himself and grabs him and whirls him around, and keeps whirling and turning with him till the Souris champion's feet leave the floor, and then Dan lets him go and he fetches up against the door leading into the dance-hall. 'Yes,' says Dan, 'I'm Dan Magee o' Skibbaree,' and leaps a yard into the air and knocks his heels together, and grabs the big-bellied stove near the bar. There was no fire in it, but it was busting with ashes. Five feet high it was, maybe, and three feet through the middle. 'Fair Helen,' says Dan, 'I'm thinking you'd better be fleeing the plains o' windy Troy,' and the barmaid ran screaming away, and in her place behind the bar Dan drops the stove. 'Hurroo!' yells Dan, and, spying a barrel full of oyster-shells, he picks it up and capsizes it on the head of the man behind the counter, who'd been yelling, 'Knock his head off, Alf!' at the top of his voice a minute before. And then Dan wades into the eight or ten real tough ones who had got after the skipper and me in a corner and were pelting us good, and he pulls them off, two or three at a time, not trying to hurt anybody, but tossing 'em right and left ten or a dozen feet away, just as they happened to come to his hand. The air was full of flying people, when the bartender came hurrying back with a mob of what looked like brass-polishers and deck-swabs from the dance-hall. Dan sees him, and 'Oh, there you are?' he says, and upsets him and grabs him by his ankles, and starts to swinging him like he was a sixteen-pound hammer, and when he has him going good he lets him go altogether. Into the crowd he'd been leading from the dance-hall he went, and those that weren't knocked over flew back to where they'd come from.

"'Hurroo!' says Dan, and throws a few chairs and tables at the mirrors and glasses and bottled goods behind the bar. 'Hurroo!' he yells, and turns and grabs the nearest man to him, whirls him back-to, grips him under the arms, jumps through the swinging-doors, and makes for the street. But the street door was locked. He spots the window with the all-red glass. 'Hurroo!' yells Dan, 'here will soon be a ship with her port light carried away,' and throws his man through the red window and jumps through after him. 'Follow me!' yells Dan, and down the hill he went with seven-league strides. And the skipper and me after him, and not a slack till we made the dock and jumped into the dory.

"The skipper rolled into the stern of the dory, and there he lay. Dan rowed out to the vessel—I was too tired—and on the way out he half whispers: 'What d'y'think of him, Jackie, that would take up with a woman of that kind and a buxom creature like the widow Simmons, with two houses clear of all debt in Gloucester, witherin' away for love of him?'

"The skipper never let on he was alive until we were alongside the vessel, and then it was all hands on deck and weigh anchor and make sail and drive her. But never a word of what had happened until Soorey Harbor was many a mile behind. And then—the middle of the afternoon it was and the *Tubal* running off before a good breeze—the skipper sidles up to Dan and says: 'Dannie, you sure they ain't no incumbrances on the widder's two houses?' And Dan says: 'Isn't it my own sister's husband's nephew is her lawyer?'"

At this point Ferris came to a full pause.

"And what became of the marvelous Magee?" asked Professor.

"What becomes of most good men?"

"I bet you *I* know," interposed the Newfoundlander. "Wimming!" He held one solemn finger in the air. "Wimming and the red rum o' Saint Peer, I bet you. They ruins the best o' men."

"When next I saw Dan," resumed Ferris, "he'd got married to a Boston girl and had a shore job—piano-moving—'just enough exercise to keep him soopled up,' he said. And there he was, in grand condition, sitting on the back porch and looking out on his possessions. A little white house with a porch in front and behind. And there was a garden with a little patch of cabbages, and a little patch of tomatoes, and a little patch of corn—a little patch of this and a little patch of that, not one blessed patch in the whole place as big as the bottom of a dory. And there was a school of white rabbits running around—for the children; and a fleet of pigeons sailing overhead—for the children. And the children like a fleet of little dories in the wake of Dan, and his wife washing the dishes and peeking out the kitchen window with an eye to 'em all. This was after supper one Sunday evening. And Dan would hoist up first one kid and then another, and with his pipe he'd blow rings for 'em.

"And he sat there and kept advising me to marry and settle down. I stood it for a while, and then I said: 'Dan, you remember that Fourth o' July you beat up the seven policemen in Saint Johns?' I thought he'd shake his head off at me and go blind with winking and ducking his ear toward the kitchen window. 'And that night in Souris?' I goes on, and he looked scared, and 'Sh-h!' he says, and I stopped. But later, meaning only to make conversation, I says: 'Did ever you think o' going to sea again, Dan?' And at that—I thought his wife was up-stairs with the children, but she wasn't—out she bounces with my hat—a spunky little woman, no higher than a buoy keg—and says: 'I don't want to hurry you, an old friend of my husband's as you are, but the last car for the city passes by the corner in five minutes. If you hurry, you can get it.' And I took that car, only it didn't pass for thirty-five minutes, and it rained most of the time I was waiting, and I didn't have any raincoat."

Jack stood up and set his coffee-mug back in the grub locker and made as if to climb the companionway; but before he could escape Professor pinned him with:

"Do you or don't you approve of his marriage?"

"Wow! I set out to tell a story to please Tom here, and the first thing in telling a story is to tell it, not to stop to preach a sermon. And to finish the story, I tell you, boy"—Jack turned and fixed Fortune Bay with a solemn eye—"I tell you they'll get you—sure's wind follows an oily sea the wimming will get you on your weak side, if you don't watch out."

"But you hear me, too, boy," put in Tom, "if it'd been Dan Magee with a few boxin' lessons out to Reno—Dan Magee afore he was married—you bet there'd been no fresh guys in Chinese trousers leanin' over the hurricane-deck of any forty-thousand-ton steamer an' yellin' JOHNSON! JOHNSON! JOHNSON! to no two lone trawlers in a dory on th' Grand Banks at four o'clock in the mornin'."

"G-g-r-r—" growled Professor, and turned his face to the vessel's side.

"Aye, boy. Good-night," said Tom cheerfully.

# IX

## DORY-MATES

Martin Carr's dory-mate having just stepped on deck, the forec's'le gang began to question Martin about him. In the fast run-off to the grounds, with everybody trying to catch up on sleep, there had been small time to get acquainted; but the general opinion seemed to be that 'twas rather a delicate-looking lad.

"That's what," summed up an unquestionably able-looking fisherman who was overhauling a tub of trawls. "He *don't* look hardly rugged enough to go winter trawlin'. D'y' think he do, yourself, Martin?"

It was put in all good-nature, as Martin himself well knew; but it was not in Martin to allow even moderate criticism of a friend to pass without retort, and so his "I never knew before 'twas looks made a man" went flying back to the lee lockers.

The man on the lockers smoothed out a snarled ganging ere he came back with "Now, now, Martin, we all know 'tisn't looks alone, but leave it to yourself—don't looks go a great ways toward your judgment of a man? Afore ever you *know* what a man is, don't the cut of his mouth or the set of his jaw, and the way he looks out of his eyes at you, have a lot to do with how far you'd trust him? Don't it?"

"Sure, it does," replied Martin. "But d'y' mean to say this lad hasn't good eyes and mouth and jaw?"

"Now, Martin"—and a broken, rusted hook was snipped off and replaced with a new shiny one—"now, Martin, nobody knows better than you what *I* think—you that c'n read a man's mind 'most. The lad's got as fine a face in a way as ever I looked at. Man, 'tis a beautiful face. But that's the bother of it—'tis beauty, not strength in it. And comin' down to facts, you know yourself, it's no joke to be out in a dory with a man that can't hold his end up. 'Tis thought of you we have, Martin. Did ever he haul a trawl or try to row a loaded dory agen a full tide out here?"

For answer, Martin continued calmly to blow his puffs of smoke toward the deck-beams.

"That means he never did, and I'm afraid, Martin, when it comes to it, that maybe he won't be able to."

"Well, maybe he won't," echoed Martin placidly; "but whether he does or no, 'tisn't Martin Carr will be the first to tell him he's fallin' short."

"But where did you pick him up, anyway, Martin?"

"I didn't have to pick him up. His father was a dory-mate of mine, nigh thirty year ago—as far back as the old *Aleutian*——"

"The same *Aleutian* that was lost with all hands afterward, Martin?"

"The same. But Jack Teevens, this boy's father, warn't lost when she was. He was lost years before that. And how? Tryin' to save a shipmate. And I was the shipmate. Maybe some of you remember now?"

"Coming across Western Bank one winter's day, warn't it, Martin?"

"Aye, makin' a passage—the old *Aleutian* runnin' before an easterly gale—everything on and staggerin' under it. Jack was to the wheel—lashed. Me on watch for'ard, was standing foolish-like between the dories and the lee-rail. In a day-dream I must've been. By'n'by comes a big sea after her. I didn't see it, but Jack to the wheel did. 'Watch out, Martin!' he hollers; but I was kind of slow, and when the sea hit her, away I went over the rail. Good as gone was I, but Jack casts off his life-line and comes jumpin' to the waist to heave me something or other to keep me afloat. Another sea comes and heaves me back toward the vessel. I grabs a draw-bucket and the end of the throat halyards, which Jack had hove, just as a third sea comes. Well, in that third sea, which broke clean over her—she bein' already hove most flat by the second sea—away goes Jack Teevens. I didn't see him go. 'Twas when the gang came rushin' on deck and hauled me aboard that they told me they could just make him out—away to looard he was—as he waved good-by afore he went down—down to stay. Lord in Heaven, what a man he was! And to go at his age!"

"'Twas hard. But he couldn't've been such a young fellow, Martin?"

"Let me see. Nineteen year ago that was. Nineteen from forty-eight—twenty-nine year he'd be that time. We were the one age."

"Lord, Martin, 'tisn't possible you're forty-eight year old?"

"That's what—forty-eight."

"Well, you don't look it. Do you feel it?"

"Feel what—forty-eight? Man alive, what's forty-eight to a man that's never seen a sick day in his life?"

"But you've taken great care o' yourself, Martin."

"Well, maybe. A little regular smokin' and a drink once in a while ashore, or maybe sittin' up a night or two by way of bein' sociable after weeks on end of this work out here."

"Could you stand to a mark and jump your ten foot six inches, toe to heel, like I see you do one time, Martin?"

"No, I couldn't. My joints aren't that soople. But if I couldn't go without sleep as long, or stay to my neck in the water, as long, or go without grub even longer—there I go, braggin'."

"That you could Martin—no braggin' to that. 'Tis me ought to know that—me, that was three days and three nights astray with you on Quero. An' when it comes to buckin' agen wind and tide with a dory loaded to the gunnels——"

"Hi-i! below there!" This from the deck. "Out dories!"

With a sigh Martin set down his pipe and prepared to get into cardigan jacket, boots, and oilskins. "I must say I hate to leave my little pipeful"—and to his youthful dory-mate, dropping down from deck—"Isn't it so with you, too, Eddie-boy?"

"I could smoke all the time I'm awake, Martin."

"Like your father before you, boy. You're cert'nly like your father other ways, too. But you're not tough like him. Sad kind of, too, like he was at times, 's if he could see things ahead. O Lord, but I did love your father, boy! And you cert'nly look like him. But, come along, now, boy. Your first trip at this work, and we must have things right."

Martin's dory, the first over the side, was dropped up to windward. To the Skipper's last word, "Set to the east'ard, Martin—it don't look none too good, but I'll be back to you after I've run the string out," Martin waved a free arm and nodded a cheerful acquiescence.

The vessel left them astern. Martin began to heave the trawls and Eddie to row. There was a disquieting pitch and toss to the sea. Anybody but a trawler would have called it bad weather for a sixteen-foot dory to be out in. It was a much heavier sea than any Eddie had ever before tried to row a boat in, and he soon said so.

"Yes," answered Martin, "I s'pose it does seem hard at first—a banker's dory in a chop—but after three or four days you won't mind it. 'Tis the cross-tide that puts that little kick to it and slats her around so. And yet the safest small boat afloat is a dory—when it's handled right. Here we are now, away out here in this little dory, set safe as can be."

"And just where are we, Martin?"

"Let me see now." Martin was a dextrous trawler, who never had to slack his work because of any little conversational strain. He kept the air full of hooks and line even while he figured it all out. "We were forty-four fifty-six north and fifty-one thirty west at noon, the Skipper said. We sailed for an hour after that—east half no'the. That ought to put us about a hundred and twenty mile from the nearest point o' land—Newf'undland that'll be. But how's the rowin'? A bit heavy, isn't it? Tide and sea together's a hard thing to buck out here, boy. You'd be surprised how they carry you out the way at times. That's the bother of it when the fog or the snow comes and you drift. Or maybe the vessel isn't anchored—flyin' sets maybe same as now—and away *she* goes. And now, Eddie-lad, try and see how you make out shootin' a trawl, and let me 'tend to the rowin'. Careful, now, comin' for'ard—you're not in a bathin'-suit in Gloucester Harbor with smooth water and no more than a hundred yards' swim if you capsize the boat. That's it—keep 'em whirlin'. My, but you're doin' fine—'tis born in people, the fishin' ways. If you were only a bit more rugged, now, there wouldn't be your better on the whole Grand Banks. But this life'll soon put the strength in you, Eddie-boy."

"If it don't kill me first," laughed the young fellow.

"Kill you? What talk is that? Kill you? Why, the way you'll eat—not three, but four, and maybe five meals a day. And mug-ups? Every time you think of it, a mug-up—and when you forget, always plenty to put you in mind of it by their example. And *sleep*——"

"When there's any time to sleep."

"Time? Wait till it comes too rough to go out in the dory."

"Too rough?" The boy looked over the gunnel and grimaced.

"Oh, it comes plenty rough at times. Have a care, or one of those little seas'll wet you through."

"H'm—I'm wet through already."

"Oh, no, not real wet through. When you get real wet out here—— But, never mind, wet or dry, we'll be alike, anyway, and company for each other, however it goes. Your father, now, he was great company in a dory. Tell stories! And sing! What's it he used to sing, now, on the old *Aleutian,* when we were hardly more than boys together? Oh, but your father had the voice, boy! And to hear him roll out—

"'Let it come from the east,
Let it come from the west'—

That's when it would be breezin' up. Dory-mates were we, the same as you and me be now, lad. And he *was* a dory-mate. I had to fight almost to keep him from doin' half my work as well as all his own, at times. I mind how he used to speak of you when we'd get a breath between haulin', or maybe walkin' the deck of a night-watch together. 'Martin, but if you could see how he's growin',' he'd say. 'Every trip in he looks a head taller. And the grip of him, Martin, when he winds his five little fingers around my one finger! And the beauty of him—the spit of his mother, Martin,' he'd say. 'And if you could see him of a mornin' climb up on the bed and grab the mustache of me and twist it. Only two year old, Martin, and talk—man, he c'n talk better than I can—the long words of him, Martin! And I do hope he'll never have to go fishin'!' He said that last many a time. 'I do hope he'll never have to go fishin' for a livin'! But if he do have to go, I'd lie easy in my grave—wherever my grave may be, Martin—if he was to have a dory-mate like you.' And to think now we're dory-mates—Jack Teevens's boy and Jack Teevens's old dory-mate. And he had to be lost, your father. Some things are hard to take, believe in a Divine Providence much as we like. And then your mother had to die, too."

"Yes, Martin. And I often wondered if she wasn't glad to go. What did she have to live for? And I think of it, what have I got to live for? If it comes to that, what have you, Martin—no wife, no family—what have you to live for?"

"What have I? Lad, it grieves me to hear you talk that way. What haven't I to live for? I've hundreds of things to live and be thankful for. There's my friends. There's the little ones I've seen—not my own—my own were taken away, please God, and their mother—but my friends' children that I've seen in the bornin' almost and now growin' up around me.

And out here, never do I step aboard the vessel after a long day's haulin' and draggin' that I'm not glad to see the friendly faces lookin' at me over the rail—or the Skipper hangin' to the wheel or the cook standin' by the painter. And at home, boy! Never a time we breast Cape Sable goin' home that I don't begin to feel cheerful, no matter how hard and rough and maybe profitless a trip we've had. And when we raise Eastern Point! and goin' into the harbor of Gloucester! Lad, lad, but my eyes run water 'most to think of the people I'm soon to see—to talk and shake hands with, maybe sit up a night or two with before I go out again. Lord, boy, if there warn't a man or woman in the whole wide world to hail good-mornin' to you—if it was no more than to look at happy people's faces when you're ashore—or out to sea again, if it's no more than to look at the sky and the fine tumblin' ocean! Even the sea in a blow, boy, is somethin' to soothe a troubled man's soul."

"To soothe? Lord, Martin, is it soothing now? Look at it. How this dory keeps from capsizing is more than I know."

"Capsizing? What, now? Why, Eddie, when you've seen it as I've seen it! But *'tis* growin' a bit more rough—isn't it? Have a care for some of those seas. That oar in the becket astern, have an eye to that, and when you notice a bad sea comin', just give the oar a little twist—so—and put her head or stern to it, whichever's handiest. It'll save a capsizin' some day, maybe. And now 'tis time to begin haulin'. The signal's been to the peak some time now, but I like to give 'em a good set myself. I c'n make up the time on the haulin'. But we'll begin now, and do you coil, boy. Here we go, four tubs of line—a mile and a half of a trawl to haul. 'Tis the rare appetite it'll give us; and when——"

"Isn't the vessel rather far away, Martin?"

"Let me see. Where is she now? Oh, yes. She is a bit away, but it must be the lee dories have gone adrift. Let's see who's in the lee dory. That'll be—let me see, now—Jethro and Eben. Eben's a good man, but Jethro's not much of a man in a dory—big enough, but not much use."

"And I guess he's not the only useless man out here to-day."

"Hush, boy, hush. What kind of talk is that?"

"It's true. Don't I know that I could no more haul trawls in this sea than—— Why? A mile and a half of trawl to be hauled, and don't I know that as your dory-mate I ought to haul half of it? And will I? Could I, even if you'd allow me, Martin? Oh, yes—about as well as I could winch in the vessel's anchor alone. Don't I know what it means—a man that can't do his share out here? It means that one of the crew is eating his share of grub and by and by will get his share of the stock, and yet who is no more use in a dory than the painter when the dory's aboard, and no more use aboard the vessel itself than the spare anchor with the vessel in harbor. Don't I know, Martin?"

"Eddie, listen to me. You talk again like that, and sure's my name's Martin Carr I'll take the privilege of your father's friend and bat the jaw of you. I will, boy, much as I like you. And let me tell you, our dory'll bring her share of fish aboard this night."

"This night? Will we get aboard this night, do you think, Martin?"

Martin looked about him—looked long about him, but said only, "Is there a drop of water left in the bottle, Eddie?"

"About half a mugful."

"Half a mugful? Well, keep that by you, and by'n'by you'll have it to drink—not now."

"I'll have it for you, Martin."

"That's your father's own boy, Eddie, but never mind me. What's a mouthful of water to me that's been without it seven days on end? It's nothin'—nothin' at all. Keep it for yourself and by'n'by drink it. It may mean a lot to you, for I know that already you're wringin' with the sweat. And you're weary, too, aren't you, lad?"

"A little, Martin."

"Oh, but it's the cruel work for you, boy. But what are you at now?"

"I was going to have a smoke."

"Well, I wish you wouldn't yet awhile, Eddie."

"And why, Martin?"

"I'll tell you later."

"Tell me now—what's wrong, Martin?"

"Well, we're astray, lad—astray. Did you never hear what 'tis to be astray on the Banks? And now night's 'most on us, and 'tis small use rowin'. The dories, last time I looked, were all points of the compass and the vessel standin' after them—a strong tide and their lines parted, no doubt. I haven't seen her for an hour or more now. We'll be the last to be picked up, anyway. She'll get to us by mornin', no doubt."

"If she ever does get to us, Martin."

"And why won't she get to us? You're not like your father there, boy. 'Twarn't in your father ever to give up, boy. With him, the blacker it came the brighter he'd get. You're more like your mother's people in that, Eddie."

"I think I must be, Martin—everybody says so, anyway."

Throughout the long cold night they drifted. Eddie, shivering in the stern, broke a long silence:

"It must be near morning now, Martin?"

"Gettin' to it, boy, gettin' to it."

"And the water smoother, don't you think, Martin?"

"A lot smoother, Eddie-boy"; and under his breath, "I only wish it hadn't moderated for a while longer."

"And the air not quite so cold, Martin?"

"Not quite, Eddie-boy"; and again under his breath, "And that's not for the best, either, just now." He looked out ahead—out and up. It was quite a little while before Eddie noticed what Martin had foreseen—the white flakes fluttering down. Only when they began to settle on the back of his woolen mitts did the young fellow take note of them—resting there for a moment and then melting under the warmth of his hand. He regarded the first flake curiously. That he could see it at all was proof that morning was at hand, and he felt glad. What it might mean to them did not then dawn on him. When his brain awoke to the warning it brought he did not obey his first impulse—to shout out his discovery. Instead, he waited and thought it all out, and as he waited and pondered the flakes fell faster.

When he had thought it all out he looked toward Martin, who was leaning over the bow. Thinking he might be asleep—he felt drowsy enough himself—Eddie feared to waken him at first. But he finally ventured to call, "Martin!"

"Aye, boy." Martin turned with eyes that clearly had not lately been closed, eyes that regarded him tenderly.

"Will it last? Don't be afraid to tell me, Martin. I think I know what it means, now."

"And you're not afraid?"

"Afraid? Why, no. 'Twas the work—the hardship I dreaded—not the danger of being lost. None of my people were ever afraid to die. And yet, I'm afraid of the sea, Martin. That must have come from my mother. She was always afraid of it—on account of my father being on it so much, I suppose. I hate to think of being drowned and being found floating in it, or even lying on the bottom of it. There's a good many lying on the bottom hereabouts, aren't there, Martin?"

"The sands hereaway, Eddie, are covered with the bones of lost fishermen."

"Well, that's what I dread. If I could only die ashore, or be buried ashore—a Christian burial with a little prayer, and then the dry earth over you. Don't *you* fear being buried in the sea, Martin?"

"Fear it? Not me, boy. Sea or shore, it's all one to Martin Carr, though maybe I do like the sea a bit the more."

"Ugh! I don't. And promise me, Martin—promise me, if it rests with you, that you'll bury me ashore."

"Hush, boy, hush. It's not right now to be thinkin' such things."

Again Martin looked out from the bow, and the young fellow huddled in the stern. The long silence chafed the boy's nerves. "What are you thinking of, Martin?"

"I'm thinkin', boy, that it's small use waitin' around here for the vessel. It's as thick o' snow as I've seen it in a good many winters, and no sign of it slacking. We've got to be doin' somethin', and we might's well be rowin'. But first, where's your tobacco? Well, throw that over—see now, there goes mine. That's so that by'n'by you won't be tempted to smoke. Smokin' makes you thirsty, and to be thirsty and no water—I mean real thirsty, after two or three days, maybe, without a drink, and you rowin' hard all the time and the juice sweated out of you—it's an awful feelin', lad. I know, I know, there *is* the snow. But snow where it touches here isn't quite what you think it. Not a square inch where the snow strikes here that isn't crusted with salt, and you know what comes of drinkin' saltish water. We may be out for days, so let's get ready. Let me see, now—it oughter be twelve o'clock by this. Yesterday at twelve I mind the tide set to the west'ard. We'll row across it—so. But first we'll pitch out the fish. It's a shame, isn't it, to have to heave the fine fat fish back after you've gone to the trouble of baitin' up four tubs of trawls—to have to haul a mile and a half of trawls and then have to heave them overboard again after they're coiled nice in the buckets and the fish to your gunnels after them. Two thousand pounds of good fish there, Eddie. 'Tis a shame, but over with 'em. And don't try to save one to eat. It's no use—raw fish. I tried it once, and my stomach was upset by it—and my stomach's not easy upset. You'd throw up your stomach, Eddie, and it will leave you weaker for the rowin'. And we're in for a row now. You've rowed a dory around in a harbor, boy, in your day, but now for a real row."

"How far, Martin?"

"To Newf'undland coast, maybe—a hundred and twenty miles—if we're not picked up."

"Oh——"

"'Tis discouragin' to think of, but don't let yourself think too much about it. After twenty-four or forty-eight hours you won't be thinkin' so much about it. 'Twill be more mechanical-like then with you—brain kind of hazy-like from lookin' at nothing but the level sea over the gunnel and your arms never stoppin'. Do you sit on the for'ard thwart, but take it easy—'tis a long drag, boy—a hundred and twenty mile to Newf'undland."

And so they set out. 'Twas a long, easy, regular stroke that Martin dropped into; just such a stroke as a man might adopt who looked for a moderately long drag to his vessel—ten or fifteen miles, say.

But this was a hundred and twenty miles. Yes, and more, with allowances to be made for the set of wind and tide and the natural perversity of the dory itself. Whoever has rowed a dory knows that nothing will swerve more easily off its course—that is, if you don't know how. Martin Carr knew how, but the young fellow with him did not; and it was Martin Carr's business to make such allowances as would offset the uneven rowing of the lad.

They rowed on. To the boy the silences were appalling. For an hour at a time nothing would be said. Martin, with the instinct of an old trawler, was husbanding every ounce of energy; the boy was numb, overwhelmed. A hundred and twenty miles! The thought of it! He did not shrink from the thought of death, but a hundred and twenty miles of this work! He began to figure it out. Say they drove the dory ten feet a stroke. That was more than five hundred strokes to a mile—one hundred and twenty times five hundred—how much? How slow he was to figure now—but, yes, that was 60,000 strokes. Good Lord!

one, two, three—why, it would take twenty-four hours just to count 60,000, without rowing at all. But to row—to reach out with the arms and haul those two heavy blades through a heavy sea—one—two—three—and every other stroke ineffective, certainly for him, if not for the strong-backed Martin Carr, because of the unevenness of the sea. Why, it would take a week, night and day.

He began to figure it up another way. Suppose they made two miles an hour. That was forty-eight miles a day—nearly three days in all. But allowing for cross-tides and cross-winds, the constant heading of the dory straight again—say four days. four days! And nothing to eat and nothing to drink during those four days of work and toil. And that meant that they must never vary from their course. Naturally they would vary. Say six days and six nights. But no man can row night and day for six days and nights without food and drink. Not even Martin, wonderful man that he was, could do it. Say they rested one-third of the time—eight hours a day. Ashore, men who did practically nothing slept eight hours a day. That surely would not be too much rest after rowing a heavy dory in a heavy sea.

Already, though he had been rowing hardly more than two hours, he was tired, with wrists hot and heavy, and his forearms cramping. And Martin himself must feel it after a day or two. Much as he had heard of these iron men, these deep-sea trawlers, they could not last it out forever. And God! suppose they were heading out across the Atlantic—and could even Martin say they were not, with no sun or stars to guide him? Would it be slow starvation? And why was it, now he thought of it, he wasn't famished? Twenty-eight hours already without food! Ah, was that why Martin buckled his own belt about his stomach—buckled it tight and made him drink the last of the water? Surely, if nothing else came, that would come—the slow starvation.

Or would it be just madness? How unreal it all was! One—two—three—four—the chafing of the oars came to him as if from some other dory in the distance. So certain was he that the noise was not made by himself and Martin that he stopped and listened.

"What's it, lad?"

"Isn't there another dory somewhere near, Martin?"

"Maybe—there's no tellin', it's so thick," answered Martin aloud, but to himself, "Already," and shook his head sorrowfully.

The young fellow, after a moment or two of listening, came to see how he had misled himself.

He resumed his examination of Martin's back—the regular bend and heave he noticed. He could not see the face, but he knew the calm set of eyes and jaw. What a man! But even Martin would have to go, too, and when they would be found, even Martin, the iron man, would be stiff and cold also, as others had been found before him. But so few were found! And why weren't they found! Capsized and drowned. That was it—or was it that they went crazy and jumped overboard? He pictured that—the sudden dropping of the everlasting oars, the last wild cry, the dive over the gunnel. He wondered would it be that way with himself.

He looked about, his first long look, and noted the sea. He certainly never had imagined the sea as it was now—not nearly so rough as on the day before—almost smooth, in fact, as if beaten down with the weight of snow which lay upon it like—like what? He had seen that often, of course—the new-fallen snow on land. But nothing like this—the cold gray waste hidden until all was white. What was it like now, that white covering? Oh, yes—why had he not thought of it before?—like the white sheet they sometimes drew over dead people.

"Martin!" he called out, then.

"Aye?"

"Isn't it awful?"

"'Tis—in a way. 'Tis solemn, boy. Here we are hid away—a vessel could be fifty feet away and we not see her. She could be twenty feet away and she not see us. But there's a consolation—the thicker it comes the sooner it'll stop."

"Then this should stop soon."

It did stop finally; after what Martin judged to be ten or twelve hours. It melted from the sea, then thinned above, and the sky shone through. Not a broad sweep at first, but patches here and there. It was later before the clear dome and the familiar stars shone out.

"There's the Great Dipper, boy—see it? It must be three o'clock in the mornin' by the placin' of it."

"Three in the morning—and we rowing since three o'clock yesterday afternoon!"

"Aye, boy. And there's the North Star and those other little stars I don't know the names of. We'll keep the North Star one good point off the starb'd bow, boy, and on that course till mornin', and then we'll go by the sun."

The morning came, and the boy noted that six inches of snow covered the inside of the dory everywhere—gunnels, strakes, and thwarts, except where they had been sitting, and the bottom of the dory, except where their champing boots and the heat from within them had beaten it into a slush; and that the snow was dazzling white under the morning sun. But above all he felt the cold.

"The wind must have shifted, Martin, it's so much colder."

"Aye, boy. 'Tis no'west now."

"A cold wind—the coldest of all, isn't it, Martin?"

"Aye, boy, but one great comfort with it—'tis mostly a clear wind, a no'wester. Should any vessel be about now they'll soon see us. But rest a while, boy. Go aft and lie in the stern—you'll be trimmin' ship better there—every little tells in a long haul; or stamp up and down and slap your arms, or take the bailer and shovel out the snow."

Having cleared the dory of snow, the boy strove vainly to overcome his inclination to lie down. But he did lie down at last. His legs were so numb that he hadn't the strength to go aft, he said, and so Martin took him in his arms and set him in the stern. "And don't rest too long there, boy. A cold wind, lad, is a no'wester."

The boy lay there till Martin bade him rise and stamp about. But he could not keep up the stamping for long. "I'm so tired, Martin, and hungry—oh, so hungry!" He sucked at a bit of snow-crust.

"Aye, boy. One older and tougher than you might say it. And don't eat too much of that stuff, and try, boy, try a while again to keep movin' your arms and legs."

He tried, but could not. So Martin bade him lie down again. And the boy lay down and began to drowse, at which Martin shook his head. But what could he do? He had to keep rowing himself. Oh, yes—he took off his own cardigan jacket and forced the boy into it. The boy, only half awake, protested—a feeble protest—as Martin, with a soft "Hush, lad, hush—weren't me and your father dory-mates for many the long year together?" buttoned it about him.

To remove his cardigan jacket, which was under his oil-coat, Martin had to expose himself to the biting no'wester, and so cold and searching was it that he took many minutes to button his oil-jacket again. To overcome the numbness—"Or soon I wouldn't be able to hold an oar at all," he muttered—he beat his hands against the gunnels, noticing the while that he not only knocked off the last little films of frozen snow-crust, but also, though this rather curiously than sympathetically, that the ends of his fingers bled under the impact of the blows. "Man, but 'tis cold, when it comes to that!" and bent over the boy to fix the jacket more securely around his neck. "So long a time without food or drink—'tis hard on you, lad—hard on you."

Back to his rowing, and no cessation till he heard the lad muttering in his sleep. "What's it, now?" said Martin, and bent toward him.

"—But to be floating around in the water or lying somewhere on bottom for the fish to eat up—" murmured the sleeping boy.

"Lad, lad, but you're right—'tis hard."

"—If it was no more than a Christian burial——"

"Christian burial, lad? Make your mind easy, but if I live, and you die, 'tis Christian burial you'll get, boy. But 'tis both of us together'll go, I'm thinkin' now." He shook the lad. "Wake—wake now, Eddie-boy—wake, boy, wake, and try and row again a bit. 'Tis cruel I am—aye, the hard heart of me—aye, boy. But now you must row, and maybe you'll warm up a while yet. Lay there, and in two hours more 'tis stiff as the oar itself you'll be."

And so the boy crept to his seat and resumed rowing, though his oars no more than slid over the surface of the sea. The lad thought he was helping—he saw the oars pass from forward to aft and back again—but it was only the dory slipping away under the ceaseless drive of Martin's tireless arms.

Throughout all that cold winter's day they rowed. And night came, and once more the boy sought the stern and lay there; and as he lay, Martin took off his oil-jacket and buttoned it about the lad's body. "There, now, a cardigan jacket and two oilskins. You ought to keep warm now. And now, Martin Carr"—he was back to his seat again—"'tis harder than ever you'll have to row or yourself freeze to an icicle."

All through that long night Martin called to the lad. Until well into the night, as he considered it, he could catch the responses. But gradually Eddie's voice became duller, and toward morning Martin got no answer at all. "Asleep, the poor boy!" muttered Martin, himself by then not too wide awake.

The stars dulled away, the dawn broke gray, and then the first long rays of the winter sun glinted the white of the crested seas. The weary man in the waist of the dory roused himself. He found himself still rowing, but that his mind had slept he felt certain. He looked about him—astern, ahead, to either side. No sail—nor smoke. He took note of the dory. Iced to a depth of six inches it was, and with every fresh slap of the sea more ice was adding. "A mile away now and we'd look like a lump of ice to any passing vessel," he thought aloud.

The no'wester whistled over the ridged seas. A no'west wind and white-tipped seas that broke over them—could man invent anything more freezing? And all night long it had been so.

"Eddie," called Martin, "Eddie-boy!" Again, "Oh, Eddie-lad—Eddie-boy, shake yourself now, boy." No answer coming from the boy, Martin more closely regarded the figure in the stern. The rising rays of the sun were tinting the stiffened yellow oilskins, but the low-drawn sou'wester allowed Martin no glimpse of the features. The hands were encased in the heavy woolen mitts, which Martin now noted were coated with ice. Still, ice was no great matter. How he wished his own oilskins—what was left of them—were iced up, too. Ice kept out the biting wind.

Gradually it came into his brain, even though the yet insufficient light revealed nothing of the boy's face, that all was not quite natural. Once more a call, but no answer, not even the old familiar shifting of the legs. "Is it asleep you are, boy, and have you been asleep all night? Lad, lad, but if you've been asleep—" he bent over and lifted the sou'wester.

The face was calm—calm as a waxen mask in a window. But the eyes—wide open! Quickly he drew off the boy's mitts and felt of the hands within. The ice on the gunnels of the dory was not colder. Martin's brain did not grasp it, what with his body being so numb, but his heart crowded itself inside him.

He dropped back to his seat and resumed the oars. But only for a few strokes. He stood up, and with the bailer began to pound the ice off the dory. "She'll sink else," he said—"she'll sink else, lad, and we'll never get you ashore." He broke the bailer trying to pound the ice off. He took the handle of an oar then—one of Eddie's oars he noted dully, one of the oars which he had lightened by cutting down, to fit the boy's feebler arms.

The ice cleared away, he went back to his rowing. But again only a few strokes, when it seemed to sweep over him what it meant—the frozen body of the poor boy—Jack Teevens's boy. He rubbed an iced mitt across his eyes. "God, what a death for you, child! What a death! And such a beautiful boy! If 'twas a tough old knotted trawler like me—— And me that was to watch out for him! Yet to watch I meant, lad, but 'twas a long night—and a cold. And not overwarm myself was I, and I'm misdoubting, too, I slept to the oars. O God, 'tis cruel—cruel!" and dropped his head on his hands.

He tried to think it out; but he had such horrible thoughts that he knew that course would never do. He lifted his body from his seat and tried to stand up. He could not, the first time, or the second, but the third he held his feet. The dory was again sagging under the weight of ice; from stem to stern, gunnels, thwarts, planks inside and out, were thick with it. The painter coiled in the bow was big around as a keg. Across the body of the dead boy the ice was beginning to pack solid. Martin gouged the gob-stick from out of the frozen bottom and began to break the ice off. He could hardly hold it with one hand, and so put both to it.

A good part of the ice knocked loose and thrown over, he reapplied himself to the oars. It was plain enough to him now. "However else it comes, 'tis for you, Martin Carr, to stand to your rowin'—to stand to it till you can push your arms out no more from your shoulders, till your fingers will cling no longer to the handles, till—till you're cold and stiff, no less, Martin Carr, than the poor boy there before you. If that comes, well and good, you've done your best. 'Tis to shore you must reach, or be picked up, or die to your oars. And mind it always, Martin Carr—Christian burial for Jack Teevens's boy."

So he rowed on. All that day and all that long night he rowed—all through a snow-storm that enveloped him like ever-rolling white clouds, and through which only his fisherman's instinct kept him to his course. "'Twill be east-no'the-east this wind—if I know wind at all, and 'tis no'the by west you're to head, Martin. Two points for'ard of the port beam you'll keep that wind, and there you are, Martin, for the nearest point of Newf'undland—if ever you get there. But, oh, 'tis mortal cold and mortal tirin'," he muttered, and yet rowed on, regarding his arms not as his own, but as a mechanism directed by some inner force and instinct that he did not recognize as part of himself.

Four full days and nights, and for the first time Martin Carr almost admitted himself beaten. His fingers, he observed, were stiffening more frequently; the rapping against the hard gunnel no longer brought the blood. Certainly they would freeze up soon. And if they froze he would be unable to row. They might freeze stiff and straight, like Eddie's there. And if so? He groaned—he would be unable to grasp the oars. But hold—he would fix that. If freeze his fingers must, he would see that they froze so as to be of some use to a man. And conscientiously he curled them around the handles of the oars. Stubborn they were at first, but he forced them into position and held them motionless till they were securely frozen to the handles of the oars.

He slid the frozen hands off the oars and back again. All well—now he could keep on rowing. And so, the oars secured beyond accident or future weakness, Martin Carr resumed his solemn way to the shore. How far to the shore then? He did not know—maybe fifty, maybe sixty miles. For all he knew he might have been rowing zigzag all over the ocean, running S's, as sometimes green hands steered a vessel over the wide sea.

However, row he did, gray winter skies and grim slate-colored seas about him. Lonesome? Aye, it was lonesome. In thirty years of fishing Martin Carr had never known so lonesome a time. Consider it—no sail, no smoke, no gull even to come screaming astern, and the boy's frozen body ever facing him in the stern.

Only the slap of chopping seas under the dory's low gunnels—that and the tumble of green-gray seas—interminable seas, curling like serpents, rolling always toward one and spitting foam as they rolled. Always that—that and the frozen body in the stern, and the thoughts that *would* come to him. Such thoughts!

Sometimes Martin Carr thought he would move the body to the bow, where he might not have it forever before his eyes. But again he wasn't quite sure that he would not see it just as clearly even if behind him; and somehow he was not quite sure that he did want it moved, even if he could do it now, which he doubted, his own fingers frozen as they were. So perhaps it was just as well, and he faced the dead boy anew.

For two days and two nights more, with his dead dory-mate's face ever staring at him from the stern—for six frosty days and six freezing winter nights in all—through that northern wind, and sea, and snow, and hail, Martin Carr rowed the dory. And made land at last. It did not look much—an iron-bound shore, where the sheer rock rose straight as the wall of a church and against which the high seas beat furiously. He could not land there—he had to hunt a harbor. He made out one at last—an inlet, with signs of people near by. His eyes were no more than pin-points in his head, but he could make out the five or six low huts set up on the rocks, and for them he headed. The way was caked in ice, and that made hard work of it for a man who had come so far without food or drink to force his way through. Using the oars as poles, he might with less labor have beaten a channel through, but his fingers, frozen to the oars, were not yet to be unsealed. He could do only one thing, and that was row. And so he rowed, ever rowed, making a channel by forcing the bow of the dory over the ice till of its own weight it broke through and went on.

In that laborious fashion he advanced. Hours in that little bay alone, but at length he reached the shore. He made sure it was the shore by a long examination before he relinquished the oars. To free himself of the oars, he had to knock the ends of them one over the other—had to do that to loosen the ice from about his hands so that he could slip his fingers free. They came away as he had frozen them, shaped in cylindrical form to the handles. He looked at them. What strong hands they were once! And now?

But that wasn't getting on. There was Eddie yet to be taken care of. Christian burial he had asked for, and Christian burial he should have. He crawled out of the dory, and reached over the gunnel with one leg till the toe of his boot touched the ice on solid land. Finding it firm, he drew his other leg after the first.

He pushed away from the dory. One step, and down he went to hands and knees, and could not get up, try as he would. He almost cried—perhaps if he had been stronger he would have cried. He, Martin Carr, whose strength had been the boast of every crew that ever he sailed with, here he was, weak as a young child.

But he must get on. If he couldn't walk, he could creep.

But he managed to walk, stumbling some, but holding his feet for the hundred yards, perhaps, to the door of the nearest hut.

They opened to his knock, a bearded man and behind him a stout woman, with a brood of fat children peering out curiously. Seeing how it must be with him, they asked him in, set him down on a chair, and told him that in a minute or two the hot tea would be ready for him; or if he would wait but ten minutes, they would run over to the store and get him a glass of brandy—good brandy from Saint Pierre.

"I want no tea and I want no brandy," said Martin Carr, "and yet thanks to ye the same. I've a dory-mate below, and he's waitin' burial. Help me with him, help me get him ashore, for I'm weak to cryin' 'most, and after that prayers and a burial and Martin Carr will never forget ye both."

Back to the dory they went with him, the man that Martin Carr had knocked up and two of his neighbors. Under Martin's directions they essayed to lift the body from the dory, one standing in the dory and two ashore. They had the body among them, suspended between the dory and shore, but it was an awkward weight, and the feet of one slipping, from their hands and down through the ice and out of sight went the body.

"He's gone!" they whispered, and stared at the hole in the scum of ice.

"Christ in heaven!" With no further word, Martin dropped through and after the body. They shivered.

Next they saw the body handed up by a pair of frozen hands. It was just deep enough there for Martin's head, as he stood on bottom, to all but show clear. They took the body from him, seeing of him only the half-submerged head, the upstretched arms, and at the end of them the frozen, hooked fingers trying to balance the frozen body.

Martin followed the body, was helped up the beach, and there lay prone. It was some time before he could move, and his first clear speech was an apology. "I'm fair worked out," he said. "I've come a long way—days and nights—days and nights—I don't know how many; but it seems like years of rowin' I've had and nothin' to eat—nor drink. Don't mind if I refused your drink a while ago—I'll take it now that Eddie's safe, and thank ye kindly for the same."

They buried Eddie—dug his grave through the many feet of snow, lowered him into the warm, brown earth, and had the priest of the village say prayers over him. Martin was there—stayed to the last shovelful and sent his own prayer with it.

Not till that was done did he hunt for a doctor. The doctor threw up his hands when he saw the sight, but without delay went to work. To save the arms and legs the entire ten fingers and toes would have to come off. The doctor told him that. "Go ahead," said Martin.

Bandaged up and rested, the doctor asked him his story. And he told it—simply, with emphasis only on the fate of the poor lad, Jack Teevens's boy.

"But when he was gone beyond all hope, when he was actually dead," insisted the doctor, "why didn't you take your cardigan jacket off him, and your oil-jacket, and put them back on yourself? He was dead, and much as you cared for him he would be no worse off. And you—with your constitution—you might have saved your hands from freezing. Why didn't you?"

"Take the clothes off the poor dead boy?" protested Martin. "Take them back after I'd put them on him? Twist and toss about his poor body after he was cold in death? I couldn't—I couldn't."

"God help you," exclaimed the doctor—"you're ruined for life!"

"Aye," assented Martin, "ruined I am."

"You take it calmly enough. Do you realize what it means, man? You, who were such a magnificent man when you were whole and sound, do you know what it means?"

Martin regarded the doctor. "Do I know?" he gazed on his bandaged hands, and looked down on his poor stumps of feet. "God help me, 'tis well I know it. Ye'll never fish again, Martin Carr; ye'll never haul trawl or row dory again, nor stand to a wheel, nor reef a sail. The best part of your life's gone. Ye're such a creature, Martin Carr, as men throw pennies to in the street. But the last thing ye did in your full man's life—maybe Jack Teevens will remember it when in another world he meets ye, that out of love of him ye stood by his boy—were a full dory-mate to him—and at the last gave him Christian burial."

# X

## LOOSE OILSKINS

It was a howling gale outside, but howling gales were common things to Peter, and he did not see why this one need hinder his taking a little stroll along the docks. Something in the appearance of the vessel just rounding the Point helped to give new life to the idea he had been entertaining for some minutes now—that a little trip along the harbor front wouldn't be a half bad notion.

Exactly what that something was Peter could not have explained. Queer inner workings were not to be argued as if they were Trust or Tariff questions; but this vessel—and she certainly was an able vessel—and the vessel just before her was an able vessel, too—both these vessels, he might say, tearing around the Point, rails buried and booms dragging, did suggest in some way Peter couldn't quite reason out, that his intended little voyage was a good idea.

It had been ever so with Peter. Never one of his favorites came swinging in before a breeze that he did not begin to get nervous. So, having made a note of the *Colleen Bawn,* Tom O'Donnell master, under a note of the *Nannie O,* Tommie Ohlsen master, and seeing nothing further to hinder he just the same as conferred a decoration on the most meritorious of his volunteer staff by giving him full charge of Crow's Nest while he should be gone. Then, with conscience clear, he climbed down the winding back stairs and out onto the street.

In and about among the wharves did Peter jog under easy sail until he felt somewhat more rested. He was, indeed, about to return to his watch tower, but happening to glance down Duncan's Dock, he made out Dexter Warren painting dories under the lee of the long shed. "Miracles!" murmured Peter, "Dexter's workin'." Picking his course over the planks of the dock, tacking in and out among the fish flakes, empty hogsheads and old broken spars, Peter noticed Dexter step away from his dories, raise his hands to his eyes, take a squint across the harbor, shake his head sadly, come back and resume his dory-painting.

But resumed it leisurely, for Dexter, as everybody in Gloucester that knew him knew, was not the man to do things in a bull-headed way. That some men painted portraits with less care than Dexter painted bankers' dories was easy to believe by anyone who had ever seen Dexter painting dories. Dexter would have told you that the dories were the more useful. He was now putting in the discriminating touches that distinguish the man who works for something other than the money there is in it. It was the precise little dab of the brush here and a deft little flirt of the wrist there, and the holding of the head first to one side and then the other, that caught the eye of Peter when he rounded to under Dexter's quarter and hailed.

"Hulloh, Dexter-boy, and what's it you're paintin'?"

"Miniachoors—miniachoors on iv'ry," responded Dexter, with brush suspended at arm's length, and himself swinging slowly around. He had some more little repartee on the tip of his tongue, but seeing who it was he forgot it, and "Hulloh, Peter," he said, instead, "and whatever druv you out this mornin'?"

"I dunno. The confinement, maybe."

"Ah, that's bad—too much confinement."

"That's what I was thinkin' myself. For who are the dories?"

"Captain O'Donnell."

"For the *Colleen Bawn?* A man'd think'd be a new vessel and not new dories he'd be gettin'—the old one's that wracked apart. Red bottoms, yeller sides, and green gunnels—m'm—but they'll be swell-lookin' dories when you get 'em done, won't they?"

"They'll be the prettiest dories that was ever put aboard a trawler out o' Gloucester," said Dexter.

"I'll bet. And he'll be pleased with 'em, I know—'specially the green gunnels—and he ought t' be along soon."

"Who along soon?—not the *Colleen Bawn?*"

"Sure. She was comin' around the Point just as I left Crow's Nest."

"No! Well, I'm glad," breathed Dexter. "I'm glad he's home again. And so'll his wife be, too. There was that gale just after she left. His wife, I'll bet, ain't slept a wink since."

Peter straddled the sheer of a broken topmast. "Whose wife, Dexter?—not meanin' to be inquisitive."

"Why, Jimmie Johnson's. He's on the *Colleen* this trip."

"Him? The little fellow lumps around here sometimes?

Why, we used to scare him 'most to death up in Crow's Nest tellin' him stories of sail carrying 'skippers.' How came it he got it into his head to go fishin'?"

"Oh, what the papers sometimes call a little matrimonial difference. I expect him and his wife ain't got real well acquainted with each other yet. She's pretty young yet, and he don't know more than his allowance about the world. I know, because his wife is my first cousin. Young married couples, I s'pose, got to have 'bout so many arguments before they find each other out. I ain't married myself, but ain't it about that way, Peter?"

"Well, gen'rally, Dexter, though not always." Peter jabbed the point of his knife-blade into his spar. "You see, Dexter, it's a good deal like vessels. You don't always know how to take them at first. There's some sails best down by the head, and some by the stern. There's some'll come about in the wildest gale under headsail alone, and others you have to drive around with the trys'l or a bit of the mains'l and that, too, when a minute too late means the vessel gone up on the rocks. Some you c'n find all about how they trim the first trip, and some you c'n never find out about; and some fine day they rolls over or goes under, and the whole gang's lost. But about Jimmie, Dexter—how'd Tom O'Donnell ever come to ship him?"

"Lord, I dunno. I only know I came down on the dock that mornin', and Jimmie was standin' right where I am now, and he just goin' to begin on a new set of dories for the *Scarrabee* that was fittin' out to go halibutin'. When I came along I was wonderin' where I could get about a week's work. I didn't want more'n a week, because I'd been promised a job in the glue factory the first of the month, and I never did see the use of wearin' yourself out beforehand when you're goin' to start in soon on a steady job—would you, Peter?"

"Well,"—Peter made a few more thoughtful jabs into the topmast—"well, no, maybe not—more especially if 't was a glue factory job."

"That's what I say. Well, I notices something was wrong, and I asks what the matter was. 'Tired of work?' I says, thinkin' to cheer him up."

"'Tired of everything," says Jimmie, and I see he was 'most ready to cry. Well, you know the kind he is, Peter. He ain't one of them fellows that'll go out and have a few drinks for himself and forget it. No; he thinks over things that don't amount to nothin' till he's near crazy—you've met them kind?

Yes? Well, Jimmie was that way this mornin'. I drew it out of him that he'd had a scrap up home. He told me, knowin' I wouldn't tell it all over the place, and——"

"And he wound up by shippin' with Tom O'Donnell? How'd Jimmie ever get a chance with Tom? He is generally careful who he ships."

"Lord, I dunno. I went away, and warn't gone more than an hour when the boy from the office came huntin' for me and says that Jimmie Johnson'd gone a haddockin' trip in the *Colleen Bawn* and did I want his job? And I came back and went to work thinkin' I had a week ahead of me or so, and here it's the fourteenth day—not countin' Sundays—and I'm glad he's back, and I hope he hurries ashore as soon's they come to anchor. Fourteen days now paintin' dories and lumpin' around this dock, and——"

"And that poor boy out in the *Colleen Bawn* on Georges through all the bad weather they've had there lately! Well, maybe it'll do him good. And his wife is your cousin, you say, Dexter? I think I've seen her—and a nice little woman, too—though I expect there was a little to blame on both sides. There gen'rally is. But I must be gettin' back. I left a lad in charge of Crow's Nest that I'm afeard ain't able to pick out a Georgesman from an Eyetalian barque loaded with salt till they're under his nose, and maybe he won't be reportin' one or two to the office till after they know it themselves, and then somebody'll ketch the devil—me, most likely. So, so long, Dexter."

Regretfully relinquishing his old topmast, and leaving Dexter and his dories in his wake, Peter gradually gathered steerage-way, and headed up the dock, from where, in time, he managed to work into the street, and then, with Duncan's office to his port hand and a good beam wind, he bore away for Crow's Nest. He had it in mind to go by way of the Anchorage, and laying his course therefor—no'west by no'the—he hauled up for the Anchorage corner.

Luffing the least bit to clear the brass railings outside the Anchorage windows, and having in mind all the while how fine it would be once he was around with a fair wind at his back, and bending his head at the same time to the breeze, Peter ran plump into somebody coming the other way.

"I say, matey, but could you swing her off a half-point or so?" sung out the other cheerfully.

"Swing off? Why, of course, but gen'rally a vessel close-hauled is s'posed to have right of way where I come from."

"Close-hauled are you? Well, so'm I—or I thought I was."

"And so maybe y'are, if you're so round-bowed and flat-bottomed a craft you can't sail closer than seven or eight points. Anyway, I'm starb'd tack."

"Well, who in——" The other peered up. "Why, hello-o, Peter!"

"What! Well, well, Sam Leary! The *Colleen Bawn* in already?"

"To anchor in the stream not two minutes ago. I hurried ashore on an errand for her."

"And what kind of a trip did y' have?"

"Oh, nothing extra so far as the fish went, but good and lively every other way. Stayed out in that breeze week before last and left Georges last night with that latest spoon-bow model and I guess she's still a-comin'. Some wind last night comin' home, Peter."

"M-m—I'll bet she came a-howlin'."

"Oh, maybe she didn't! Peter, boy, but if you only could've seen her hoppin' over the shoals last night and comin' up to Cape Ann this mornin'! But what d'y' say if we stop inside, and have a little touch?"

"Well, I don't mind, seein' the kind of a day it is, Sammie. And I want to ask you about that little fellow you shipped—Jimmie Johnson."

"Ho, ho—'Your oilskins are too loose,' says the Skipper to him. Ho, ho—wait and I'll tell you about him, Peter—'Your oilskins are too loose—' ho, ho."

"What did he mean by that?"

"Wait, till I tell you, Peter, boy. But let's sit down and drink in comfort. There y'are. Here's a shoot. G-g-g-h-! m-m-! but ain't it fine to feel that soakin' into your inside planking after you've been carryin' a dry hold for sixteen days? Ain't it? What? You bet! And about the little lumper-man—it was funny from the start. I was down the end of the dock with the dory, waiting for the Skipper the mornin' we left, when along comes this little fuhla lookin' like something sad'd happened. I kind of half knew him from seein' him around the dock now and again. He seemed to be lookin' for some good sympathetic party to tell his troubles to and I let him pour them into me. He talks away and I listens and before he's through I begin to see what the trouble was. 'What you need is a couple of drinks,' I says—'What d'y' say if we step up the dock and have a little touch?'

"'No, no,' says he, 'I ain't drunk a drop since I got married—and I never will whilst I am married.'

"'Then if you don't hurry up and get a divorce, I can see that you're goin' to carry around an awful thirst,' I says, but the way he took it I see he didn't want any foolin'. And then, to soothe him, I asked why he didn't go a haddockin' trip, and forget it."

"'Do you think I'd forget it?' he asks, eager-like.

"'Well,' I said, 'I can't say. Some people remember things a long time, but you go a trip with Tom O'Donnell, and you'll stand a pretty good chance, 'specially 'bout this time o' year,' I says. 'And maybe it'll teach people a lesson,' I insinuates. And just then down the dock comes the Skipper, with big Jerry Sullivan. Ain't he a whale though—big Jerry?"

"Yes, and gettin' bigger every day."

"Yes. Well, the Skipper was layin' down the law to big Jerry, and you could hear him the len'th of the dock. He was sayin', 'I told him we'd leave at nine o'clock, and its quarter-past now, and I told him above all the others, knowin' his failin'. He knows me, and he oughter know that when I say nine o'clock that 'tis nine o'clock I mean, and not ten, or eleven, or two in the afternoon; and we've been in two nights now, and he's had plenty o' time to loosen up since."

"'That's right enough, Skipper,' says Jerry. 'I heard you myself, and I said myself, "Now, mind, Bartley, what the Skipper's tellin' you." But you see, Skipper, it was a weddin' last night, and a wake the night before——'

"'A wake and a weddin'! And whose weddin'—his?' roars the Skipper.

"'Why, no,' says Jerry.

"'Was it his wake, then?'

"'Why, Skipper, don't you know it couldn't been his wake?'

"'Not his wake and not his weddin'? Then what the divil reason has he?'

"'Why,' said Jerry, 'I ain't sayin' he's got any good reason. But you know what he thinks of you and of the vessel. He's been in the *Colleen* ever since she was built, and he's a fisherman—a fisherman, Skipper, stem to stern a fisherman—and he knows your ways and the vessel's ways,' says Jerry.

"'Indeed, and I'm not sure he knows my ways too well,' says the Skipper. 'It's so proud he should be to sail in the *Colleen Bawn,* the fastest, ablest vessel out of Gloucester, if I do say it myself, that—— But no more talk. To the divil with him. There's the dory—jump in and go aboard.'

"'But what'll I do for a dory-mate?' says Jerry.

"'Oh, I'll get you a dory-mate. When we put into Boston for bait there'll be plenty hands to pick from on T wharf.'

"Well, just there I nudges the little lumper, and he sets his jaws and steps up: 'Captain, could you give me a chance? I'd like to ship with you for a trip.'

"The Skipper looks down at him. 'And who are you?'

"And right away he begins to tell his troubles to the Skipper, and the Skipper listens like a father. But Jimmie near spoiled it all by windin' up, 'Oh, I've been workin' around the dock lately, but I used to be quartermaster on a harbor steamer in Boston one time,' to let the Skipper know he wouldn't have a passenger on his hands.

"The Skipper looks him up and looks him down. 'Quartermaster on a harbor steamer once, was you? Think of that, now. It's the proud man you oughter be! And about as big as a pair of good woolen mitts! But'—and he looks over at Jerry sideways—'you'll have a mate that's big enough. Jerry,' and he begins to smile sly-like, 'Jerry, here's the dory-mate you've been screechin' for.'

"'What!' howls Jerry, 'him—him! Why, I could slip him into one of my red-jacks. That little shrimp! A shrimp? No —a minim!'

"It was scandalous, of course, to speak out like that to the little man to his face, but Jerry and his reg'lar dory-mate Bartley were great friends; and Jerry'd kept on, but the Skipper puts an end to it, and we went aboard.

"Well, we puts into Boston for the bait, gets it up to T wharf and puts out. Coming down the harbor it was Jerry and the little man's watch on deck. Jerry put him to the wheel. 'Bein' quartermaster of a harbor steamer here once, of course you know the channel,' says Jerry, and leaves him and goes for'ard. Well, we went along till we were pretty near the little lighthouse on the thin iron legs that sets up like it was on stilts in Boston Harbor. Well, you know how the channel is there, Peter, and this time it was blowin' some—wind abeam. I mind the little man askin' Jerry afore this if it warn't pretty bad weather to be puttin' to sea and Jerry sayin' maybe it would be for harbor steamers. We were crowdin' along at this time, Jerry for'ard by the windlass, me in the waist, and the little man to the wheel. We gets near to the little lighthouse—like a spider on long legs it was—Bug Light is the name of it, and a good name for it, too. We were crowdin' through, and I was thinkin' of askin' Jerry if he hadn't better take the wheel himself, and then I thought I wouldn't. It warn't my watch, and you don't like to be hintin' that maybe a man don't know his business, not even a man that was green as this one might be in handlin' a fisherman. Well, we gets nearer and I noticed the little man beginnin' to fidget like he was nervous or something. At last he hollers out to Jerry, 'I say, matey, what'll I do? I don't know's I c'n keep her away from the light, and there's rocks on the other side. What'll I do, matey?'

Jerry turns around. 'Whatever you do, don't call me matey. And whatever you do again, don't put this vessel up on the rocks or the Skipper'll swing you from the main peak and let this fine nor'west breeze blow through you.'

"'But we won't go by,' hollers the little man; 'we're goin' to hit it.'

"'Well, hit it if you want to,' says Jerry—'it's your wheel. You shipped in Bartley Campbell's place, now do Bartley Campbell's work. Anyway,' goes on Jerry, 'you won't do any great harm if you do. It's bent to one side anyway here where some old coaster or other hit it a clip last fall. Give it a clip the other side and maybe you will straighten it out.'

"Jerry no more than got that out when the vessel got way from the little man and ran into the light. The end of her bowsprit hit it fair as could be against one of the long, thin iron legs. Oh, a wallop she fetched it! There was a man climbin' up the ladder the other side of the light—to fill his lamps, I s'pose—and when we hit the light he gets shook off like an apple from a tree, and drops into the water. The vessel bounces off, and the Skipper and the rest of the gang comes rushin' up on deck. 'What the divil's that?' says the Skipper; and seein' the man in the water, he rushes to the side and gaffs him in nice and handy.

"'What the devil do you mean?' yells the man the Skipper'd gaffed, soon's he'd got his mouth clear of salt water.

"There's nothing slow about the Skipper—'What the divil do *you* mean?' he yells, 'by comin' aboard this vessel?'

"'What do I mean?' says the man. 'What do you mean by running that gaff into me the way you did?'

"'Will you listen to him?' says the Skipper. 'It's gold medals we should be gettin' from the Humane Societies for savin' the life of him, and now it's nothin' but growling because we did save it.'

"'Saved my life!' sputters the lighthouse lad. 'My boat was right there when I fell. Why, it ain't your vessel's length away now under the light'—the *Colleen* was beginnin' to slide away again—'and I want you to know I c'n swim like a fish.'

"'Then swim, ye divil ye, swim!' says the Skipper, and picks him up and heaves him over the rail. 'Yes,' says big Jerry, 'swim, you lobster, swim!' and he pushes him along with an oar he'd grabbed out the top dory. And he swum.

"And then the Skipper comes aft. 'Who the divil,' says he, 'was to the wheel?' and spots the little man, who was lookin' more surprised than the light-keeper in the water.

"Oh, it's you, the little man that used to be quartermaster on a harbor steamer once."

"Yes," says Jimmie, "and I kept your vessel off the rocks."

"The skipper looked at him like he was a new kind of fish. 'And you kept her off the rocks? And did you ship for a fisherman or what?' And the Skipper looks at him a little more, then laughs and takes the wheel. 'Maybe,' says he, 'the insurance company would like it better if I took her the rest of the way out of the harbor myself. And I don't want to lose her. She's too good a vessel—the fastest and the ablest out o' Gloucester. But go below now, boy, and have your supper.'

"Well, that passed by all right, but outside the harbor, off Minot's, we ran foul of the *Superba*—that latest spoon-bow model. We see her comin' and sway up, but she comes on and goes on by. 'And she used to be a good vessel once,' says Dick Mason, her skipper, to some of his gang standing aft. Sayin' it so we could hear him. 'A good vessel once, the *Colleen Bawn,* but she's been wracked so she can't carry sail no longer.'

"Imagine Tom O'Donnell, Peter, havin' to stand on the quarter of his own vessel and take that from Dick Mason! He looked after the *Superba,* then he turns us to, and it was sway up and no end to the trimmin' of sheets. But no use. The *Superba* kept goin' on away, and the Skipper couldn't make it out. He stood with one foot on the house, his chin in his hand, and his elbow on his knee, and tried to figure it out as he looked after her. It was by the wind, and plenty of it—the rail nice and wet—couldn't been better for our vessel. 'There's something wrong,' says he. And there was something wrong. We found it after a while. It was one of the iron bands that was holdin' her together—the one for'ard was loose and draggin' under her bottom. The Skipper was tickled to death when he found what it was. 'I knew there was something wrong with her,' he says; and puts into Provincetown and has it bolted on again. 'Now,' he says, 'she'll be nice and tight again when we want to drive her. And if we runs foul of that spoonbow again, we'll see.' We warn't out the harbor hardly before, the wind gettin' at her, she begins to leak for'ard, but the Skipper pretended he didn't see it, puts around the Cape and off for Georges, where we got to just about in time to ketch that no'west gale that was riotin' out there the week before last. We were blowed off the bank, but banged her back, blowed off and banged her back again, tryin' to hang on so's to be handy to good fishin' when it moderated. But it was a week before it did moderate, and by that time the *Colleen* was pretty well shook up, with the water sizzlin' through her like she was a lobster-pot for'ard, and the gang makin' guesses on how long before she'd come apart altogether. The Skipper, he didn't seem to mind. 'She's a little loose,' says he, 'but don't let it worry ye. Keep your rubber boots on, and don't mind. So long as the iron bands hangs to her planks she'll hold together.'

"Well, as I said, it moderated, and we got a chance to fish a little on and off for another week, and the troubles of Jerry with his dory-mate that week would fill a book. 'It's two men's work you have now, Jerry,' I says to him. 'What two? Three,' says Jerry. 'It's my own work and his work and another man's work to see he don't get tangled up in the trawls or capsize the dory or fall over himself and get lost.' However, fishin' on and off brought us to yesterday with the Skipper sayin': 'Too bad it's too rough to put the dories over. Ten thousand more, and I'd swing her off for Gloucester, I would. But another set, and, with any kind of luck, we'll get that, and then we'll swing her off.' He'd only just said that—he was havin' a mug-up for'ard at the time—when whoever was on watch sticks his head down the gangway and calls out: 'Captain, here's the *Superba,* and she's goin' home, I think.'

"'What!' says he, and gulps his coffee and leaps for the gangway, and we knew that our notions about a comfortable loaf might's well be forgotten. He takes a look at the vessel comin'. 'That's Dickie Mason, sure enough. Shake the reef out the mains'l, and we'll put after her.'

"'Mason's under a trys'l, Skipper,' says big Jerry.

"'And so would I be in that cigar-box,' says the Skipper.

"We drives up and shoots under her stern. 'Hi-i, Captain Mason!' sings out our Skipper.

"'Hi-i, Captain O'Donnell,' hollers Mason.

"'Know this vessel do you?'

"'That old wrack?—I sure do.'

"'You do? Then swing on your heel and follow her home.' And then he turns to us, 'Boom her out now, boys—boom her out—no'west by west and never a slack.' And off he goes straight for the shoals, with a livin' gale and the black night on us.

"'Twarn't more than an hour, or maybe two, runnin' like that, when we couldn't make out the *Superba's* lights any more. The Skipper himself went to the masthead and looked. 'She's put to the nor'ard, I think,' he said, comin' down. 'But then again maybe he isn't. Maybe he's put them out. Anyway, we'll keep on and make a holy show of her—the fine *Superba,* indeed! that don't dare to follow the *Colleen Bawn,* and the wrack he says she is! Maybe he'll get his courage up and come after us later, but whatever he does we'll keep this one as she is."

"We were fair into the shoal water then with the Skipper keepin' the lead goin' himself. 'Billie Simms in the *Henry Parker* showed me in the *Lucy Foster* the short course over these shoals,' he says—'and it cost me something to learn, and I haven't forgotten the road.' He wasn't tellin' anybody what water he was gettin'. It was pretty shoal though, man, it was. Once or twice we were real worried. But he's the lucky man, Tom O'Donnell. The wind hauled and he swung her fore-boom over and tried to spread a balloon. It carried away her foretopm'st, which maybe was just as well. And all night long he kept her goin'——"

"Lord, but you must've had it, Tommie. And Jimmie Johnson—how was he makin' out?"

"Jimmie Johnson? Ho, ho! the little lumper. Let me tell you. In the middle of the night, thinkin' the worst of it was over, with the shoals behind us, the gang went below and turned in, all but me. I gets my pipe from my bunk and was havin' a smoke, and thinkin' of turnin' in too, when this Jimmie Johnson comes down from the deck, lookin' pretty well worried.

"'Ain't it awful?' he says.

"'Ain't what awful?' I asks.

"'Why, the night—the vessel—the way she's sailin'—and everything else.'

"'Why don't you turn in?' I asked.

"'It's no use turnin' in now,' he answers; 'my watch comes in half an hour or so.'

"'Your watch?' I thought of him trying to stand watch on such a night, and so he says, 'Turn in, I'll stand your watch.'

"'Will you?' he says, and looks like a load'd come off his chest.

"He was goin' to turn in then, when he happened to think he'd like to have a mug-up. So he gets a mug of coffee and a slice of pie, and takes a seat on the wind'ard locker. There was plenty wind stirrin' then, mind you, but there he was havin' a nice little mug-up for himself, sittin' on the weather-locker and all oiled-up, leanin' over the table, his mug o' coffee to one hand and a wide wedge o' pie to the other. 'The cook of this vessel does make the finest apple pie, don't he?' he says, and you could see his spirits was beginnin' to rise, with the hot coffee gettin' inside of him. The *Colleen* was bumpin' herself all this time, rollin' over like she was goin' to lie down, and then gettin' up again. Sometimes her forequarters first and sometimes her hindquarters, doin' all those kind of things you get used to on her when Tom O'Donnell is drivin' her in a blow. Well, I watches this little Jimmie for a while, till I happen to think that so long's I had another watch to stand I might's well have another pipeful while I was waitin'. I was thinkin' of steppin' over for a bit of tobacco out of big Jerry's bunk, which was right over where this Jimmie Johnson was sittin', when the *Colleen* gave an extra good lurch, and with it all at once this lad sank down about a foot or so, and Jerry at the same time most comes through the bottom of his bunk. The lad, he gets pale, and makes as if he was tryin' to stand up but couldn't. 'What is it?' I said. 'My oilskins,' said he. 'All the looseness in my oil-pants is ketched tight.' And then Jerry woke up, with the noise he made in fallin', I s'pose, and the most surprised man you ever saw. 'Mother o' mine!' says Jerry, 'what's that?' and just for'ard of him Aleck McKenzie leaps a foot into the air, hittin' the deck beam so hard he must've left pieces of himself stickin' to it. 'What in the—!' says Aleck, and when he got that far he sees this Jimmie Johnson. 'Did you do that?' he says.

"'Do what? No, I didn't,' says he, still tryin' to get himself off the locker. Aleck notices the efforts he's making without understanding them.

"'What you doin' there anyway?' says Aleck.

"'I dunno," says Jimmie, and just then the *Colleen* falls the other way and lets him loose again, and he leaps for the gangway and up on deck. Man, he fair flew, and I went up after him, not knowin' what might happen to him.

"Up on the deck there was the Skipper just able to keep his feet and talkin' to Dal Skinner, who was to the wheel. It was dark enough, but you c'd make him out where the light of the binnacle hit on his wet oilskins. Up to him popped the little man from somewhere, 'My God, but it's a wild night, ain't it, Captain?' says he.

"'Who the divil's that?' says the Skipper, and he peeks along the deck to where Jimmie was hangin' to the weather rail. After takin' another peek and seein' who it was, the Skipper don't pay no more attention to him, but goes on talkin' to Dal.

"'I'm thinkin',' says the Skipper, 'that it's moderatin' a bit and maybe she'd stand the stays'l pretty soon.' Jimmie, I guess, was listenin' to that and couldn't hold in any longer. 'Oh, Captain, Captain,' says he, 'she's fallin' apart forward,' and tells him what happened in the forec's'le.

"'How long you been sleepin' for'ard?' asks the Skipper.

"'Four nights now,' says Jimmie.

"'Only four nights? That's it, you're not used to sleepin' for'ard yet. You mustn't mind that. They all used to think that at first. But, Lord save you, don't you mind that. That's just a little way she has. She don't mean any harm.'

"'But Jerry fell through his bunk.'

"'And why wouldn't he? sure he weighs a ton.'

"'But,' says Jimmie, 'she pinched my oil-pants, her planks opened up so wide!'

"'That so? And what size oilskins do you wear?'

"'I dunno,' says he—'these belong to Jerry Sullivan.'

"'There it is,' said he, 'Jerry's a big man, and his oilskins are too loose for you. Go below and see if you can find some that are four sizes smaller and get the loan of 'em. Go below anyway,' says he. 'You'll feel better.'

"'If you don't mind, Captain,' says he, 'I'd rather stay on deck awhile—it's safer, I think.'

"'All right,' says the Skipper, 'but don't get in the way.'

"He hadn't got that fair out, when 'Hard down—hard down!' comes ravin' from the watch for'ard. 'Down,' hollers Dal, and the *Colleen* makes a shoot, and the booms start to come over. And just then the Skipper makes a jump for the waist after Jimmie and slings him out of the way of the fore-boom. He saved Jimmie from bein' knocked overboard and lost, but he couldn't save himself. The boom ketches him side the head just as the vessel heels down again on the other tack and over the railing he goes——"

"Not overboard, Tommie!"

"Yes, overboard and into the black sea, and me standing by couldn't save him from it. I jumped for the rail, but he was gone, and over on the other side the clumsy ark of a vessel we had to turn out for went on by. The watch must've been asleep aboard of her.

"'On deck everybody—all hands on deck!' I roars it loud's I could, and had the gripes slashed off the nest of lee dories by the time the gang came flying up on deck.

"'The Skipper is gone,' says I—'over with a dory!' and we had one over in no time, and Jerry and me jump in—Jerry in his stockin' feet—and away we go. We couldn't see so much as a star in the sky, if there was one—not even the white tops of the seas—but we drove her out, and 'twas all we could do to keep the dory from capsizin' by the way. 'To looard!' I says, and to looard we pushed her, and heard a voice: 'Hi, the *Colleen Bawn!* On your lee quarter.' 'Twas the Skipper's voice. But 'twas one thing to hear his voice, and another in that night and sea and blackness to find him, and keep the dory right side up at the same time. But he kept singin' out and we kept drivin' away, and at last we got him. A hard job he must've had trying to keep afloat with his big jack-boots on, and everything else on, for the fifteen minutes or more it took us to find him.

"'Lord!' says he, 'but I'm glad to see you. Paddling like a porpoise I've been since I went over the side. But drive for the vessel—there's her light—and I'll keep bailin', if one of ye'll lend me your sou'wester.'

"We got alongside, and the Skipper climbs over the rail. 'Put her on her course again,' he says, and then starts to go below to overhaul his head.

"And then Jimmie Johnson steps up. 'How'd it come, Captain,' he says, 'you fell overboard?' By the light from the cabin gangway the Skipper sees him, and——

"'How did I come to—you little—I dunno what. Take him for'ard, somebody,' says the Skipper, 'and tie him in his bunk, or give him laudanum out of the medicine-chest, before we have all hands lost tryin' to look after him.' Then he goes below to fix his head up—the side of his head was laid clean open, with the blood runnin' scuppers full from him.

"''Tis a great pickle—salt water,' he says, and he takes an old cotton shirt and tears it up and wraps it 'round his head, and goes on deck, where Jerry asks him how he managed to stay afloat so long in that sea with all that weight of big boots and clothes on him.

"'I dunno,' answers the Skipper, 'unless it was the air under my oil jacket that was holdin' me up.'

"And after that he kept her comin' just the same, Sam?"

"Just the same. All night long he kept her comin', and payin' attention to nobody. In the early mornin', I mind we passed Josh Bradley in the *Tubal Cain*, him bangin' along with a busted fores'l, like a gull with a broken wing. We passed a fleet of old plugs anchored off Highland Light, ripped by 'em roarin', and they lookin' over the rails at the Skipper, his head all wrapped up. And then what should happen but he made out the *Nannie O* ahead. ''Tis Tommie Ohlsen,' he says, 'under four lowers. We'll chase him.' But Tommie must've seen us, for soon we saw his tops'l break out. Then we sent up the stays'l, and then Tommie sent up his. Then we came swingin' round the Cape—and I'd like to had a photograph of her then—with the Skipper standin' between house and rail to wind'ard, squeezin' the salt water out of his beard, and Jerry below singin':

'What's that a-drivin' in from sea,
  Like a ghost from out the dawn?
And who but Tom O'Donnell
  And his flying *Colleen Bawn*.'

"''Tis fine and gay they're feelin',' says the Skipper, 'with their singin', thinkin' they'll soon be home. In a minute, now, there'll be something to sing about. Look at what's coming,' and she gets it fair and full. And it was too much for the gang. Her house goes under before the squall and fills her cabin solid, and up on deck the cabin gang come runnin'. 'For God's sake, Skipper, what are you tryin' to do, drown us all?' 'Don't worry,' says the Skipper, ''tis only a little squall, and the *Nannie O* ahead.' 'But what're we goin' to do, Skipper? We can't stay below.' 'Oh, climb on the weather-rail,' says the Skipper, 'and if she goes over, 'tis only a mile to shore.' And then the face of little Jimmie! 'My God, my God—my poor, poor wife!' he says. 'Hush, lad, hush,' says the Skipper, patting his head, ''tis to your wife we're takin' you,' and he keeps on chasin' the *Nannie O* across the bay."

"And then?"

"And then? Why, he kept her goin' across the bay. Half-way home, there was a big white steam yacht layin' to both anchors. She was big enough to tow the *Colleen* ten knots an hour. 'You'd think it was banshees we was, the way they look out from between the lace curtains,' says the Skipper, and we rips by her stern like the express train goin' by West Gloucester station.

"A little while after that we overhauled Eben Watkins. Eben, you know, used to brag some about that vessel of his one time, but now he was under a storm trys'l. 'Twas kind of thick—we'd lost sight of the *Nannie*—and the Skipper was goin' on by without intendin' to say anything, but Eben hails him.

"'Where were you about two hours ago?'

"'Roundin' the Cape,' says the Skipper.

"'What sail d'y' have on her?'

"'What she's got now.'

"'That stays'l?'

"'That stays'l—yes.'

"'And how'd she stand it?'

"'Just wet our rail—just wet our rail.'

"'Go to hell!' yells Eben—'just wet your rail.' 'I s'pose Tommie Ohlsen just wet his rail, too,' says Eben. 'All we could see of him goin' by a while ago was the weather-side of his deck.'

"''Tis Tommie I'm after,' hollers back the Skipper, and gets out of hearing.

"I don't know whether we gained or lost on the *Nannie O*, but we carried our stays'l every foot of the way from Cape Cod to Eastern Point and we carried into the harbor just the same's we came across the bay. Did you see her beatin' in? No? Well, it was a scandal. Her deck was slidin' back and forth under our feet—we could feel it, and you've seen a soap-box with the top and bottom gone floatin' about in the tide? Yes? And how it lengthens out sometimes when a sea hits it broadside? Well, that's the way the *Colleen* was shiftin' back and forth comin' in the harbor. She was that loose 'twas immoral. 'Man, but she's loose,' says Big Jerry. 'She is a bit loose,' says the Skipper, 'but she sails better loose. She always did.'

"And that's the way she came in. When we came to anchor the Skipper went into her peak with a lantern. 'I think she's a little more loose than ordinary this trip,' he says—'it must be the calkin'.'

"'The calkin'?' Comin' on deck again he tells me to go ashore to see about a place for her on the railway. And I guess I'd better hurry along. But afore we go, Peter, just a little touch to the *Colleen Bawn*, for, God bless her, loose as she is, there's nothing like her out the port."

"And are you goin' to stay on her and she like that?"

"And she that way? And why not? He's going to put iron rods—shaped like a letter X with turnbuckles in 'em for'ard—and then she'll be all right. She'll leak a little maybe, but what's a little leak? And anyway with Tom O'Donnell in her there's always somethin' doin'. And so here's to her, Peter-boy. One thing, you know you're alive on her—and here's to the *Colleen Bawn*."

"To the *Colleen Bawn*, Tommie, and I don't know but what you're right."

When Peter came out of the Anchorage again, the atmosphere had cleared. The blush of the sky was a marvelous thing for March. Peter could not remember when he had ever seen so rosy a morning for that time of year. And it was a fair wind for homebound craft, too—so fair that Peter could not but remark it. "If we was comin' home in the *Colleen Bawn*, or the *Nannie O*, in this breeze, our wake'd be fair boilin'. The *Colleen Bawn* with Tom O'Donnell aboard, or the *Nannie O* with Tommie Ohlsen—they'd be loggin' fifteen knots—yes, and sixteen maybe." He looked over his shoulder, and for twenty fathoms back he could see the smooth, white line and the brass-bound log whirling like mad. It was certainly a rosy morning, and Peter rolled happily along for Crow's Nest.

Along the road he overhauled Dexter Warren, who seemed to be out taking the air.

"Seen Jimmie Johnson yet, Dexter?" asked Peter.

Dexter took a hand out of one pocket to gesture. "Jimmie? Yes, and he's crazy. He came up the wharf like a ghost. 'Hulloh, what kind of a trip'd you have, Jimmie?' I asked, 'and how do you like Captain O'Donnell?'

"'Yah,' he says, 'your oilskins is too loose.' 'What?' I hollers after him—he goin' up the dock like a streak. 'Take to the weather-rail—it's only a mile to shore,' he waves his hand and hollers back to me. And then his wife popped around the corner. 'Jimmie!' says she. 'Jennie!' says he, and in a second it was all off. The pair of them flew up the dock like a pair of gulls before a no'the-easter and I picked up my pots and brushes and went up to the office and told the old man that I guessed I'd quit."

"And did you?"

"Did I? And why wouldn't I? Jimmie's job is waitin' for him if he ain't too crazy to take it, and if he is it don't matter to me. There's my glue-factory job the first of the month. 'Your oilskins is too loose,' says he. He must be crazy, Peter—plumb crazy."

"Yes?" said Peter, and relaid his course for Crow's Nest.

"'What's that a-drivin' in from sea,
  Like a ghost from out the dawn?
And who but Tom O'Donnell
  And the flying *Colleen Bawn.*'

So hummed Peter, and mounted the ladder to Crow's Nest with a feeling that his little morning trip along the water front had not been without its reward.

# XI

## GEORGES SHOALS

Dannie Keating was the happy man that night! Under the light of the winter stars he drew her to him, and down the shady side of the street they came, caring no more for the whistling wind than for whatever curious eyes might, from behind drawn blinds, be peeping. "If anybody's rubbering, they're all sore," said Dannie, and broke the night air with—he simply couldn't help it—with snatches of tuneful songs of love.

The blood was running riot within him. "Don't I love you, Katie? Don't I? And don't you? And don't we both?" and in the shadow of the steps of her home he drew her yet closer to him and kissed her—kissed her—a thousand times he kissed her before she could draw a free breath again.

"And in the morning, Katie, I'll be putting out. You won't see me, it'll be so early. And it'll be the last trip in that old packet, though maybe I oughtn't say that of her that's earned a good bit of money for me—earned enough to pay for the new one, Katie—the new one that'll be ready for me the next trip in. And then, Katie, dear, we'll see—as good as anything of her length and beam out the port. And have you picked a name for her yet? Yes? The *Dannie Keating,* indeed! No, no, I've a ten times better one—and you'd never guess, I'll bet. And she'll *be* a vessel! Every cent that you saved for me, dear, went into her."

"You saved it yourself, Dannie."

"I saved? Lord bless you, Katie, how much would ever I save if I hadn't turned it over to you as fast as I made it? How much did I save before I met you? A whole lot, warn't it, now? Why, girl, the very oilskins I used to wear would be drawn against my next trip. But it don't matter which of us—every cent the pair of us have saved has gone into her. And she'll *be* a vessel, and then, if any man sailing out of this port thinks to make me take my mains'l in——"

"Hush, Dannie, don't begin by being reckless. And I wish you weren't going out in the *Pantheon* again. She's so old, Dannie, and not the vessel for a winter trip to Georges."

"Well, there *is* better. But she's been a good vessel to me, dear, and that means to you, too. And only one more trip, and then the fast and the saucy—the handsome *Katie Morrison.*"

He parted from her after that, and from the shadow of the doorway she looked after him, her heart jumping and herself all but running after him. Up the street she watched him swing, so straight and strong. Oh, but the shoulders of him! and the spring to his every stride! Then she breathed a prayer for him, and went up stairs and to her bed.

But she could not sleep. All night long she tossed, whatever it was possessed her; and in the dawn she got up to watch by the window until he should come by on his way to the vessel.

He would come by, she knew. He never yet failed to go that half dozen streets out of his way so that he might look up at her window. Oh, the times that she watched from behind the curtains—before she knew him well, that was—and he never suspecting!

And he came at last. It was but five o'clock then, and dark—a winter morning. But she needed no light. Long before she could make out his figure she knew his footfall. How lightly he trod for so big a man—to his toes at every stride, as a strong man should. No doubt or hesitation there—a man to go winter fishing that, and enjoy every whistling breath of it. And he was singing now!

"O sweetheart dear, I love thee!"

When a man sings a love-song at five o'clock of a winter's morning—— She threw on her mother's prized cashmere shawl and ran down.

"Dannie!"

Across the street he leaped, three strides from curb to curb and two more to the top step. "Katie—Katie—and this cold morning!"

"I couldn't let you go by without saying good luck again, Dannie."

"Oh, the girl!" He patted her head and drew her to him till he felt her lips making warm little circles against his neck.

"Dannie?"

"Yes, dear."

"I wish you'd stay at home this trip. The *Pantheon* is old."

"Old? So she is. Not the vessel the *Katie*'ll be—not by a dozen ratings. But Lord, Katie, I've been through too many blows in her for you to be worrying now, dear."

"I know it, Dannie, and yet I wish you weren't going this trip."

"Well, I wish I warn't myself. I'd like nothing better than to be staying this month home and watching the new one building—to overhaul every plank and bolt and thread of oakum that's put in her. All day long watch her building, and every night come and tell you how she is getting on, the pair of us side by side before the fire. That'd beat winter fishing on Georges—fighting your way out of the shoal water when it comes a no'the-easter, and chopping ice off her to keep her afloat when it comes a no'wester. Yes, dear, it cert'nly would be a comfort—home here with you and watching the *Katie* building. But we can't both have comfort, dear. You to home and me to sea we'll have to be for many years yet, dear. I'll go out this trip as I went out a hundred of others before. When I'm back—why, 'twill be worth the trip, dear, that coming back to you."

"I'll be walking Main Street as soon as I hear you're in, Dannie."

"Then the old *Pantheon* won't be too long tied to the dock before somebody'll be making flying leaps up the wharf. There, there, dear, this one trip, and then it'll be Mrs. Dannie Keating and a month ashore—hah, what! There's the girl! But God bless you, dear, and keep you till I'm home again."

"Good luck, Dannie. There, but oh, Dannie?"

"Yes?"

"Don't go yet—just a minute more, dear."

He patted her cheek and dried her eyes, and when she wouldn't stop sobbing, he unbuttoned his coat and made her rest her head on his breast. Her ear against the blue flannel shirt, she could feel his heart. And it was a heart—like all of himself, full of strength. A cold winter's morning it was, but here all afire. He was right—it would be a storm indeed when he went under. And yet—she could not help it—she broke into sobbing again.

"What's it now?"

"Oh, Dannie, last night after I left you I heard my father telling that another vessel had been given up for lost. Did you know?"

"I've heard, dear."

"And you never told me. You tell me the danger is small——"

"And 'tis small, dear. Sea room and sound gear, and a good vessel will live forever. Of course, accidents will happen—sometimes something parting at the wrong time, or being run down by a steamer in the fog—which was what happened, I don't doubt, to the *Tempest*."

"Well, whether she was run down by a steamer, or caught in the shoals, or foundered in the heavy seas, isn't it all the same to the wives and children of the *Tempest's* crew? Think of young Captain Proctor's wife. What an awful thing for her, Dannie!"

"I know, dear, I know. But hush, now—that's the girl. And don't worry for me. Though they come masthead high and toss us like we're a pine chip, I've only to think of you, Katie, here in the doorway looking down the street after me—a last look for me before I turn the corner. Only to think of that, and I'll laugh—laugh out loud at them. 'Come on, you green-backed devils!' I'll say—'come on! You'd overpower us, would you? Higher yet, high as the clouds, if you want, and the *Pantheon* she'll ride you down.' And she will, too, Katie—the old *Pantheon's* a wonder hove-to. Yes, Katie, only last trip I hollered like that to 'em one night, and——"

"Oh, but you mustn't, Dannie—it's like boasting."

"Boasting? No, but seamanship, girl—seamanship. It's knowing, not guessing—knowing how to handle her. Just sail enough and wheel enough and your wake setting so's to break the backs of them afore they can come aboard with their shoulders hunched up, spitting foam and roaring warnings—green-eyed like. 'Tis they boast and threaten, not me. And if 'tis to an anchor——"

"Well, dear, don't talk that way again. And go now, while I'm strong to let you. Good luck, Dannie, and don't forget——"

"Forget what, Katie?"

"You know what."

"Oh, well, tell me just the same—don't forget what?" And he laughed in advance to hear her say it. And she whispered it, and he came nigh to crushing her as he heard.

"And don't I love you, too, Katie?"

"I know it, Dannie. Only with me, if you don't come back I can never love anybody else again—never, never, never. I love you, Dannie."

"And do I love you, Katie? Do I? Do I catch my breath and walk the deck on the long black winter nights because I can't sleep—driving and fighting, days and nights? Tired out I ought to be, but no more tired than the roaring sea itself. Thinking of you, Katie, thinking of you. But I'm off now, dear, and don't forget—— No need to say what, is there? But tell it again? And sure I will, dear. Whisper"—and he retold it softly in her ear. And she, loving to love, loving to be loved, could not see to let him go for another while. "And will I come home again? Will I? Did I come a hundred times before? Or was it my ghost? Aye, a healthy ghost. But say a prayer for me just the same. Though what's to be is to be. God bless you, Katie Morrison, I'm off."

There was every promise of a wild night, and a wicked place to be on a bad night is Georges Bank in shoal water. To the westward, barring all possible escape to deep water and good sea room when the northeaster blows, is a ridge of sand with no more than twelve feet of water. Over that the lightest draught vessel of the Gloucester fleet would not have bumped on a calm June day. So shoal is it and so heavy the seas in there that vessels have been known to pitch head first into bottom at times; their bowsprits have been found so stuck in the sand by fishermen who dared to cut close in on summer days. A vessel striking there was much worse off than if she struck in on a bare beach of the mainland, because while in either case she was sure to be battered to pieces, out there on Georges was no escape for the crew.

As a matter of fact, in very heavy weather a vessel would hardly live to strike the clear beach. She would be smothered long before that. In ten fathoms of water, say, with a big sea and strong tide running, there were rip waters to send the foam mast-high, to catch the vessel up and spin her about as if she were a top such as boys whip around in spring-time. Small wonder fishermen dread shoal water on Georges in a breeze; small wonder that the smart trawlers hustle dories in and bear off in a hurry when they find themselves in less than twenty-five fathoms and a breeze making; small wonder that even the hand-liners quite often jeopardize their chances for a good trip and up anchor and away when it looks too bad.

But there is not always time to get away. Sometimes the storm makes too suddenly. One might say that expert fishermen, above all others, should be quick to foresee a coming storm. They are quick enough, Lord knows—years of perilous observation have made them so. But there are those who won't leave, come how it will. Every coming storm does not mean that the one terrible storm of years is at hand; and when it is so difficult to get back to just the right spot after a storm has scattered the fleet, why let go for what is only probability, not a certainty, of disaster?—especially when a vessel is on a good spot. It is only the one wicked storm when good seamanship, fishermen's instinct, sound gear, and an able craft do not avail. And what real fishermen would not risk the one wicked storm now and then? That is how they put it, and therein have some of them come to be lost.

This was a case of sudden storm and everybody aware that it was to be a wild night; but such fishing as they had been having that day was too tempting to leave. Certainly aboard the *Pantheon* they had no notion of leaving it. They only knocked off for the night when the tide got altogether too strong for them. With sixty fathoms of line in twenty-five fathoms of water their ten-pound leads struck bottom only twice before they came swirling to the surface again.

John Gould was the last to haul in his line. "You don't often see the tide any stronger than this," he observed to his skipper.

"That's a fact, John, you don't," answered Dannie, together with John half turning a shoulder and ducking his head to the drenching sea that was coming aboard. "And some of the fleet's takin' notice, too. There's old Marks and Artie Deavitt and McKinnon and Matt Leahy givin' her more string. That's what they think of it already. M-m—Lord, smell that breeze?" He took another look about. "Better have another look for'ard, John, there, and see she's not chafin' that hawser off. All right? That's good."

A moment more and he shook his head, and five minutes later he sang out to the watch. "Might's well give her a little more string, fellows. Didn't intend to give it to her so soon, but this lad up to wind'ard, I see he's givin' her some more, and we'll have to put out more or he'll be on top of us. I cal'late he's got half a mile of hawser out now. A man that figures on gettin' worried so soon ought to keep off by himself somewhere."

That was at eight o'clock, with the tide racing toward the shoals before a fifty-mile northeaster. There was not a great deal of sea by then. There never is when tide and wind run together and it is the first of a breeze. But when that tide turns!

"Yes, sir, when this tide turns—if anybody wants to see somethin' superfine in the way of tide-rips, right here'll be the place," remarked Dannie, and, seeing that the extra length of hawser was paid out, dropped below for a mug-up. "There's no tellin' when we'll get a chance again for a cup of coffee," he said. "'Twill be a long night, I'm thinkin'. But what'll that mess be, cook, when it's done cookin'?"

"Tapioca puddin', Skipper."

"That's good." He helped himself to a mug of coffee, saying no further word, barely giving ear to John Gould, a miraculous man, who had survived thirty-five winters on Georges, and was still rugged as oak.

"When our old cook used to make tapioca puddin', 'twas a sure sign of heavy weather comin', warn't it, Skipper?" asked John.

Dannie barely inclined his head, and John turned to his less preoccupied mates. "That last big breeze—let's see. Yes, two year ago this month. I'll never forget that gale. Nobody will, I cal'late, that was out that night. The Skipper here was in this same vessel—she twenty-five year old then. The glass was down that afternoon but the sea smooth, that is, for that time o' year. But by ten that night! What a night that was! Wind! And sea! Forty vessels and five hundred men in the hand-linin' fleet that night, and every third man and vessel gone by the mornin'. God, how they did smash into each other! And their spars—like fallin' trees when they'd come together in the dark."

John passed from narrative to reflection. "Some widows made that night!"

"There ought to be a law," continued John, "to keep vessels from anchorin' so close to each other. Take it that night. If the fleet warn't bunched up so close there wouldn't 'a' been half so many lost. Yes, sir, there oughter be a law, don't you think, Skipper?"

"What?" Dannie came out of his abstraction. "What—oh! a law, eh? And who'd come out here to see it lived up to? Gover'ment vessels? No, John, no law would do. Where there's good fishin' there men and vessels will go, and devil take the risk. I know we oughtn't be huddled in here like we are. I know that if another such breeze as that one two years ago hits in here to-night there'll be just as many of us lost as there was that night. Yes, sir, just as many." He stopped by the companionway to button his sou'wester under his ear—"Good pie that, cook. I hope the tapioca'll taste as well in the mornin'"—drew on his mitts, and went on deck.

Down the companionway soon came his voice. "Everybody up, and give her more string, and stand by. There's one or two of them beginnin' to drift a'ready."

They heard his voice roll along the deck then. "Aft there, call all hands to give her more hawser—and the chain with it!"

They did so, noting as the chain rattled out that the wind had increased perceptibly. "When this tide's settin' back there'll be *some* sea kickin' up here," they heard him say. And then his voice again—from aloft this time: "Give her more yet—another fifty fathom." Down he dropped to the deck with, "It's goin' to be hell around here to-night! If 'twas some vessels I've been in—or if 'twas the *Katie Morrison* now, that's not finished—it'd be slip cables and out of here—and in a hurry. But not in this old packet—'twouldn't do. She'd most likely split in two tryin' to beat out, and cert'nly she wouldn't get back here in a week if the wind hauled. No, sir. But what's this?" He held up a bare palm.

The entire crew began to sniff the air then, and, holding out their palms, to catch and taste whatever the wind had brought.

Snow! A howling no'the-easter in shoal water on Georges, the vessel dragging—— *And* snow!

Dannie made no comment. Even after he had made certain of it, he said nothing, nor made any new move—only stood by the fore-rigging and tried to map out in his mind the location of the others of the fleet.

"And now let's see—we're pretty nigh the most westerly of the bunch. Jack Kildare, he's about east by south. If he does drag, he'll most likely miss us. Simms—the *Parker*—he's about east by no'the and maybe two cable-lengths away. She won't drag, I'm sure—rides easy as a gull. Jim Potter, he's about right to fetch us—no'the-east—and those two that dropped in just to the no'the-ard of him at dark to-night—they might, too. Any of those three'll get us in short order if they get to draggin'." Again he held his palm up. "Gettin' wetter—and thicker. There'll cert'nly be hell to pay round here to-night, and the old *Pantheon*—but, Lord, she's been through too many blows to——"

The vessel leaped under him, sagged back and started to rush forward again. His quick ear caught the first of the crunching. "Stand clear of her for'ard!" he warned, and himself jumped to the protection of the foremast, as through her bow planking they heard her chain go zipping.

A moment of almost a dead stop, a breath of portentous quiet, and she swung broadside to the sea. "Wa-atch out!" roared the Skipper. Aboard came the sea in tons. "Hang on! hang on!" called one to another. All clung grimly to whatever was nearest. It passed on, submerging everybody, but leaving the vessel still right side up.

"Everybody all right?" called the Skipper.

Each for himself answered—all but one.

"Henry!" called the Skipper. "Henry Norton!"

No answer. And again no answer.

"I cal'late he's gone, Skipper."

"He must be. God help him!"

"And his folks, Skipper—he's the third of his family been lost out here."

"And there'll be more before the night's over," muttered one at Dannie's elbow.

"Maybe there will," snapped Dannie, "but in God's name wait till it happens. Below there—— Oh, cook, hand up a torch, and let's see what's to be done."

"Chain parted, Skipper."

"Well, it don't take any magician to see that. But let's see what else."

The chain, before parting, had torn through two of the stout stanchions.

"*Some* tide that!" observed old John Gould, and his voice was that of a connoisseur in tides.

"Yes," admitted Dannie. "But go aloft, one of you—you, John—and see if you can see anybody comin'. There'll be somebody down on us soon. And the rest of you stand by to put sail on her. It'll be too much to expect that single hawser to hold her. And go aft, you, Dick, and take a soundin'."

Came John's voice from aloft. "Can't see half a length away."

"All right, come down." He turned toward the stern. "What water?"

"Twenty fathom."

"Twenty? Drifting as fast as that? Put sail on her—the big jib first. Jib? No, not yet. Give this one too much head-sail and she'll be into the hummocks before you could half put the wheel down on her."

"Ninteen fathom."

"Nineteen? All right, boy, keep soundin', and loose your jib now, fellows."

"Eighteen fathom, Skipper."

"Eighteen fathom? Man, I think I hear it roar," observed one.

"I hear it, too. Is that the surf?" came from another.

"'Is that the surf?' Who's that damn fool? Oh, it's the new man. Well, maybe you're part way excusable. Yes, that's the surf under your lee. It 'twas light you could see it break. But don't mind that, boy—I've heard it before and come away."

"Maybe you have," commented one unthinkingly, "but there's not been too many that's been near enough to hear it and got home to tell about it—not too many."

"For God's sake, choke that croaker, somebody! And drive her, fellows—no time to lose now." Dannie was all over her deck. "And stand by with the axe, you, Fred, so when we have to, and I give the word, cut and we'll run for it."

"I s'pose she couldn't stand the mains'l, Skipper?"

"No, John, she couldn't—not this old hooker in this breeze. Just the extra weight of that boom outward now and over she'd flop, sure as fate. She's thirty year old, this one. Lord, if 'twas only the *Katie,* wouldn't we go skippin' out of here! But go aloft again, John."

In the whirl and thickness of snow they tried to follow John as he climbed the rigging, swinging and clinging, fighting his way up.

John's voice, but too muffled to be understood, came down to them. One man jumped into the rigging and passed the word along.

"He says a ridin' light to wind'ard—two of 'em."

"To anchor are they? Make sure."

An exchange of words above. "John says he thinks one of 'em's driftin'—only her ridin' light shows, but the other's just showed a side-light—her port light."

"Port light? That's bad for us. Look sharp to the wheel. And for'ard, who's got the axe—you, Fred? Well, get up the other axe and stand by with it you, Tim. Slash to it, both of you, when I give the word. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, sir."

He stepped back to the break and tried to catch John's voice for himself. Not getting it easily, he jumped into the rigging. "What's that last—of that one sailin'——"

"Another vessel driftin' down—and another—two draggin' and two sailin', but not makin' much headway. An awful wind aloft, Skipper."

"Aye, John—and below, too. But what's that? Hell!" He dropped to deck and leaped to the wheel. He was just in time to dodge the side-sweep of a vessel's bowsprit as she swirled by his quarter. Another moment and it caught the stern davits, the dory slung up to them, and then the end of the *Pantheon's* main boom. Cr-s-sh!—cr-s-sh! The bowsprit of the stranger cracked sharp off, the *Pantheon's* dory went to kindlings and her boom smashed at the slings. "Hi-i! you blasted loon, where you goin'?"

"Hi-i!" came back a yet hoarser voice—"couldn't help it—parted hawser and chain cable both."

"That's bad——"

"Yes—good-by."

Dannie fanned the snow from his eyes. "If that ain't hell—talkin' to men you can't see and they driftin' away to be lost! And the dory gone, though it's more than a dory we'll need to-night."

"Oh, Skipper!" came from aloft again.

"Aye, John."

"Near's I can make out, there's four or five vessels bearin' down——"

"Close by?"

"Pretty close—yes, sir,"

"Wait—I'll be with you." Aloft climbed Dannie. It was a fight to make his way aloft, such was the force of the wind and so wildly swayed the rigging of the old *Pantheon.*

From the deck the crew gazed after the Skipper till they could see his swaying shoulders no more. Soon he came flying down, and after him came John, both by way of the snow-slushed, slippery halyards.

"Cut!" roared the Skipper before he had fairly hit the deck—"and at the wheel there, let her pay off."

"Cut—cut!" Away went the twelve-inch rope in stubborn convolutions through the hawse-holes. Around came the *Pantheon,* and by her bow came driving a great white shadow.

White sail against white snow on a black night she came driving on, and only a memory of a dim light to mark her when the shadow of the sails could not be made out.

"Showin' side-lights is she?"

"No side-lights—draggin'."

"Aye, and draggin' fast as some vessels ever sail."

Again a shadow, and from out of the night inarticulate voices—voices that grew in volume, rang loud, louder yet—not so loud, muffled, yet more muffled, quiet again—voices as if from another world, not to be clearly distinguished. "Did anybody ketch what they said? Nobody? Well, that's their end."

"God help 'em, yes."

"Sixteen fathom, Skipper."

"Sixteen! We cert'nly can't be weatherin' it much."

"Lord, I should say not. And seas to swallow us alive. Looks bad for us, too, don't it, Skipper?"

"Looks bad for who? Dry up! There's a whole ocean to the east'ard of us—how's she pointin'?"

"Su'the-east by east."

"Su'the-east by east? That the best the old whelp can do? That means she'll point no better than no'the by west when we jibe her. Try and hold her up."

For a moment the snow lifted and they caught points of light—a red and a green and several white lights. "Most of 'em still to anchor. I hope none of 'em get in our way."

The snow fell again, and once more John Gould went aloft.

"One on the starb'd tack, Skipper."

"Aye, don't mind her—only on the port tack."

"Aye. Here's one, wherever in the devil she came—hardalee, hardalee!"

"Hardalee!" Dannie jumped to the wheel and helped to roll it down. "Where's she now?"

"I've lost her. Thick o' snow again. Here she is—and another on the other tack."

"God in heaven! one on each tack?"

He got no further. A hail came from somewhere aloft, and yet not from the *Pantheon's* masthead—a voice, not John's, called out something or other—a dozen voices called—a roar of voices mingled with the shriek of the wind, and then slipped by another dread shadow.

"Fifteen fathom, Skipper."

"Aye," breathed Dannie. He made out the shadow, not altogether with his eyes—the deeper senses do the work on such nights—and let her pay off. "But we can't run this way long—we'd be smothered in the shoal water." Again he tacked, again in a shadow of sails. "She's in the same fix," he muttered, and tacked again. No shadow pressed and he drew breath, but hardly a whole breath, when again voices, from aloft as well as from across the water. All about him he looked to make out. When he did make out anything there were two of them—one to each side. There was nothing to do, then, but try to outrun them both. He eased off his sheets and away went the old *Pantheon*.

"Running to perdition if I hold this long." He could hear the roar quite plainly now, and, hearing it, groaned. "But I've got to keep clear. God! why don't they hold up?"

And then it came—from straight ahead and so suddenly that no human power could avert, no quickness of hand or eye or trick of seamanship or weatherliness of vessel could avail. Head on to the old *Pantheon* it was—a phantom of white above and a band of black below showed through the driving snow. One awful wait there was and then it came. The *Pantheon* cutting into the other's upper planking, her bowsprit bore through the other's rigging and foresail—cr-s-sh!—cr-s-sh!—the smash of breaking timbers, the tearing of iced-up canvas, and above all the howl of the wild gale.

Men hailed out questions, oaths, and words that no man could understand. They held so, the bow of one into the waist of the other, long enough for men from the *Pantheon* to leap aboard the other and then to leap back. "Man, she's worse than we are!" shouted one, as back he came. The sea poured in by way of the great gashes. A moment more and it poured unchecked over the *Pantheon's* rails. The spars of the stranger went over the side and across the *Pantheon's* deck. Somebody moaned that he was hurt, but there was no time to find out who. The stranger's dory bobbing up alongside, one man made a wild leap for it, fell short, and that ended him, though that mattered not much—he had no chance either way. Others—wraith-like voices—were heard calling from the sea before they went under, smothering. One man called to a mate, "Take hold, boy," and both rode grimly to their death, cresting high the great seas, astraddle the *Pantheon's* chain-box.

Dannie clung to the wheel, hoping that wind and sea would carry the *Pantheon* clear, and that, being ready, he might yet force her off the shoal. But not so. They did come apart, but apart they settled even more rapidly. The stranger went down stern first; the *Pantheon,* stern hove high, pointed her bow after the stranger, and began to settle that way, bow first.

Dannie was alone at the wheel when she made her plunge, and defiantly clung to her till he was carried far under. He rose to the surface and caught his breath. And that breath he gave to the *Pantheon* as he saw her mast-heads plunging. "You were a good vessel to me," he murmured, even as the sea tossed him far away. He reached for something in the swash and found he had the wheel-box. He grasped it, but it was all smooth-sided—no place for his hands to get a grip, and the terrible tide rips tore him loose. One sea, and another, now high where the heavens touched the crests almost, and again in the depths and roarings he was cast like the flying spume itself.

Enveloped in foam so thick that even when his head was above the surface he could not breathe fairly, he still tried to justify that last catastrophe. "And yet you were a good vessel to me."

There is always a last sea, and that last sea caught him fair and overbore him. He knew it when it came. The physical agony was by then over, the soul surmounting all. Not till then did he indulge himself so far as to let his heart dwell on the memory of her as he last saw her, standing in the doorway when he turned the corner. For the last time he had turned that corner. Ah, but she was beautiful—and was it to lose her he came to sea?

The roar of Georges Shoals was in his soul. He began to hear the voices then, voices of his own men—he knew them—and voices he had never heard before—voices, no doubt, of men lost in these longs years of toil in waters where the sands below are white with lost men's bones. Her voice he heard, too—heard it above all. "Dannie, Dannie," it whispered, plain as could be. By that he knew that she needed no newspaper to tell her—even at that moment she knew—knew, and was suffering. And all her life she would have to suffer. And so it was "God help you, Katie Morrison!" that parted his foam-drenched lips at the last.

The *Katie Morrison* was launched and rigged, but 'twas another young and hopeful skipper that sailed her out to sea.

# XII

## HOME BOUND, THE NANNIE O

Along the rocky shores of Old Cape Ann an easterly gale was stirring. In from the sea by way of the Point, across the harbor, and through the streets of Gloucester it moved boisterously. Down along the wharf-front it whistled through halyards, stays, and the unclewed tops'ls of vessels in the docks, and from the more lofty roofs picked up and skied to the clouds everything that was not made fast with at least a double hitch. The most heavenward structure down that way, the observation-tower of the fish-syndicate, shook and bent as if it were not more than a church-steeple, and the very top of the tower, the "Crow's Nest," swayed in a way to suggest to one imaginative inmate the snapping of a whip, and to another, the evolutions of a burgee to the main truck of an able vessel and she driving to market before a fine breeze o' wind. It was a northeast gale from Newfoundland to Cape Cod, the Weather Bureau said, with some minor wrecks along the coast.

Up in Crow's Nest they read all the weather reports, but it took more than weather reports to disturb their peace of mind. They knew that a fleet of distressed coasters had come bumping into the harbor over night for refuge, and that a string of storm-flags were still flying from the roof of the Custom-house—they could see all that and a lot more from their aerie, but they were not worrying particularly up in Crow's Nest. It was too bad, of course, about the coasters, but coasters and fishermen weren't the same—not by a blame sight, not by a ding-blame sight—not meaning any disrespect to the coasters. And as for the storm-flags, a lot of wind out to sea was no reason that there'd be lives lost on the Banks. Wind, just plain wind, never hurt anybody. And this was only a summer gale anyway, and it was able vessels and able seamen sailing out o' Gloucester. This breeze might give the passengers on ocean-liners something to talk about on winter-nights for a few years after they got back to the prairies again, but good Lord! there were skippers out o' Gloucester who, if they happened to be in a hurry home, wouldn't bother to reef for this—no, sir, wouldn't stop to reef, but keep her coming all the way. Lord, yes, keep her coming all the way.

They were doing very well up in Crow's Nest this tempestuous morning. With a fine drying fire in the stove, and close by the stove a new level of fresh, inviting sawdust, with what looked like a sufficiency of tobacco in sight and what appeared to be a disposition to pass it around, with hatches drawn and a new tin-patch on the roof—with all tight and dry and snug, why shouldn't they be doing well? The storm without seemed only to better the humor of those within. They hearkened to the roaring of the gale outside, and they all began to feel as if they had just come off watch—a hard watch in the thick o' fog, with sheets straining and seas breaking over her quarter—and bathed in the glow that comes of that kind of thinking and wrapped twice around in the belief, on this particular morning, that in all Gloucester their quarters were not to be improved upon, could they be feeling otherwise than comfortable up in Crow's Nest?

The helpers, who clung to the locker-seats like barnacles, felt to the full the measure of all this comfort. Blissfully they sat and smoked and spat toward the outlying parts of the box of sawdust. To be sure, they did have their little troubles. Every little while, in obedience to "Old Peter's" voice of authority, somebody or other would have to detach himself from his position on the locker and stand his watch. With a lingering motion that suggested something of the tenacious love of a periwinkle for a low-water rock, the commanded one would tear himself off, make his way to the port-hole, take a look out, and report to old Peter, the one man there who drew pay, and who, sitting in his easy-chair with his feet on the edge of the sawdust-box in the center of the room and his back to the seaward-side, should have been enjoying the greatest comfort of all. He should have been, it would seem, but for an hour now the volunteers had reported nothing but mist and white-caps out to sea, and Peter was getting nervous. The picture of the catastrophe, if one of the firm's vessels should steal in unreported, photographed itself on his mind so frequently that he felt impelled at length to ease his nerves, even at the risk of slightly wounding the feelings of an aide-de-camp or two of his staff. "With this gale behind 'em," said Peter, by way of breaking more gently to them his very low estimate of their worth as lookouts —"with this gale behind 'em, it seems to me there ought to be some of the fleet comin' along soon. In a breeze of this kind, the fairest kind of a wind to the east'ard, and enough of it to suit the most desp'rate sail-carriers out o' Gloucester, they oughter be comin' along like a drove of wild horses pretty soon, don't you think? Anyway, maybe I'd better take a look for myself. No offense meant; but you lads brought up ashore, you haven't the eyes for it quite—not quite. And you're gettin' to love your comfort too well. Anyway, I cal'late I'd better take a look for myself."

He rose regretfully, stuffed his pipe into his pocket and had a look for himself.

What he saw, off-shore, was a tumble of long seas and a field of scud flying before the gale in many patches; and, inshore, the swift advance of many lines of bold-marked ridges piling high in a green-white tumult above the rocks of the Cape. He viewed them calmly, as a man who has fought them views them—to sea, the crested, sweeping waves and the flick-lashing of the wind whipping over them; and along the rocky shore, the bold rollers tumbling over, piling up, and crashing high, and the wake of the fierce undertow swirling back again. He watched it for a while, this play of the sea, not alone that little part of the sea almost beneath him, but also that greater part far out from him, and then took note of the sky above; not near so thick massed now were the clouds, as when he had last looked out, an hour ago, nor driving so turbulently, and yet they were still flying with great speed. "They'll be gone by noon," thought Peter, "and we'll walk home to dinner with the sun shining through again, or I don't know."

Musing thoughtfully over that, he drew his pipe from his pocket and struck a match. The match sputtered and went out. He lit a second, and then—then it was he saw her. Waiting for the second match to blaze, and glancing casually out through her port-hole, but with an habitual watchfulness withal, his keen old eyes saw her. A shaft of sunlight breaking prematurely through the thinning clouds struck her and lit her up, just as his eyes happened to rest on the right spot, and he saw her—a flash of a handsome fisherman, long and narrow—black hull that shone and gold stripe that glittered. Jumbo, jib, fore, main, and both topsails—in his admiration he noted every sail of her, as might any landsman who had never learned to take in hull and rig entire, the whole thing at a glance. "By the Lord, but she's an able vessel!" breathed Peter, "and her skipper, whoever he is, is a-sockin' it to her. Drive her, drive her, God bless you, drive her. Two tops'ls! By the Lord, but you're the lad to get her home—drive her!"

Unconsciously he had spoken the last few words aloud, and now the whole room was at his shoulder. It took such an announcement as that to wake them up. "Two tops'ls did you say? In this breeze? Where?—where?"

"Look," answered Peter with an indicating arm. "Look. See her now? Where's the glasses? Maybe I c'n make her out." He looked, and knew her. "It's the Nannie O, by the Lord! See her now?" They looked and saw her. They did not know her from any other vessel, but they saw the low, black hull with all the white sail. Tearing around the Point she was then, with her lee cat-heads just showing out of water.

"Are you sure that's the Nannie, Peter?" inquired a doubting one at his shoulder. "Are you sure? Wasn't it only yesterday some skipper reported leaving her seven or eight hundred miles to the east'ard only a few days ago and she not ready to leave for two or three days? Somewhere up on the Grand Banks she was then—last Thursday, I think it was—and not goin' to leave for two or three days—and now only Tuesday. That skipper got in only yesterday afternoon, Peter, and he made a pretty fair passage himself, they said."

"Hush," chided Peter, "there's passages and passages. It's Tommie Ohlsen himself. Ain't he a dog though? Four lowers and two tops'ls, his deck awash to the hatches, two men to the wheel and the rest of the crew huggin' up under the weather-rail—yes, and glad they're so near home, I'll bet. Only yesterday afternoon, Wallie Manning—the Cleopatra—in from a shackin' trip—it's him that one o' you meant, I s'pose—Wallie reports the Nannie seven hundred and fifty mile to the east'ard and not goin' to leave afore Saturday night. 'Any message?' says Wallie to Tommie—'any message?' 'Nothin' particular,' says Tommie. 'Might tell the old man, when you get in, he might be gettin' a new fore-gaff ready for the Nannie. This one we got now went to hell on the way out—fixed it up as well as we could, but if we have to jibe her over again all standin' something's liable to happen to the Nannie if it comes thick and there's rocks under our lee goin' home. Main topm'st a little sprung but we c'n maybe make that go a while longer.' 'And when will you be leavin' for home?' asks Wallie. 'Not afore Saturday night at dark, anyway,' says Tommie. 'We'll fish the week out, anyway. If we have good luck we'll swing her off Saturday night. If the wind's fair and we have any luck fishin'—Saturday night, but not before,' says Tommie. 'Good-by. Report me to the wife, if you happen to go by the house,' and he waves his hand to Wallie as the Cleopatra goes shootin' by.

"So Saturday night he must've sailed and here it's only Tuesday morning. Two days and three nights, and seven hundred and fifty miles, I s'pose we c'n say, he's come. I'll bet there was some draggin' of sail on the Nannie comin' home. Two men to the wheel to hold her, the deck jumpin', if I know Tommie, and life-lines out maybe and himself with his arm hooked into the main riggin' all the way home. Maybe I that's sailed with him don't know."

"The wind must've been fair all the way," hazarded somebody over by the stairs, "when she made such good time."

"Fair enough if it's the same way to the east'ard as it's been here at Cape Ann the last three or four days. Tommie wouldn't want it any fairer than this. It oughter suited Tommie like a fish on every hook—abaft the beam and plenty of it. That's what pleases Tommie, wind anywhere along there—abaft the beam—over the quarter. Man, I mind how pleased he was that time we put into that Norwegian port up to the no'the-'ard just afore we left for home that summer, after Tommie'd made that long cruise for new halibut-grounds. Went clear up to Spitzbergen afore he stopped that trip. The Lord knows how many thousand miles we sailed the Nannie that trip. I know we got about's far as some of them North Pole hunters ever gets. At eighty north I know we was ketchin' halibut, but the ice chased us south again. The Nannie O warn't no polar-boat, you see, with grub for about four hundred men and dogs for four hundred year, and so Tommie flew before the ice, and that's the time he put into this Norwegian port. What was the name of it now?—ha? Christiansund? No, not Christiansund—I mind Christiansund, where you shoot in the harbor at one end and out the other. 'Twas away farther north than that. Stamsund? No, I mind that, too. No, not Ellingsund, but some name like that. Anyway, up that way it was—some sund port up there to the no'the'ard. Tommie, you know, was born somewhere up in Norway in one of them sort of bays—fjords they calls 'em. But he came away from there so early that it didn't leave any bad effects. You know what I mean. There's some able fishermen up there, let me tell you, but they don't have the vessels nor the gear we have. There's where they go out in open boats no bigger than one of our seine-boats—not so big sometimes—with just one square sail in the middle and they can't hug no nearer than six points to the wind, though in their national pride, as you might say, they'll tell you they c'n get within five points and sometimes four points, which is fool-talk on the face of it. For with one square sail in the middle of her and no keel to amount to anything and loose rock in the bottom for ballast, how could they? Anyway, out they go, and in the winter, too, fifty or sixty miles off shore, and of course they sometimes get caught, a lot of 'em, and don't come back. I see by the paper the other day where a hundred of 'em was lost lately in one gale.

"Now Tommie was brought up to that when he was a little boy, and when he comes over this side, why he was just ripe for Gloucester. He learned fast. You c'n just imagine how a big fast able Gloucester schooner would hit a Norwegian boy who'd been having to go out and ketch fish in open boats. Anyway, he warn't fishing out o' Gloucester many years afore he begins to get ideas about things, being a husky, intelligent lad and not scared of anything that ever came out the sea. He got chances with the best skippers out o' Gloucester. He got a lot of ideas about carryin' sail 'specially. One thing he got good and hard into his head was that a real skipper never takes in his mains'l while anybody else in sight's got one standing. And when he did get that into his head—an' you know how the right kind of a boy'll go the limit to be as good as somebody he admires—well when Tommie after fishin' with half a dozen real sail-carriers out of here, when he'd been with them a while and then gets a vessel of his own, why it got so that men with families used to talk it over on the corner afore they shipped with Tommie. Of course, Tommie had sort of soaked in the atmosphere, as you might say, by that time.

"Well, this time I'm telling about he was in what I call the proper temper to try some sail-carryin'. The few years he'd been skipper up to a while afore this he'd been in old plugs, but, beginnin' to do pretty well, the firm built him the Nannie O, and Tommie cert'nly thought he was fixed then. And he had a right to think he was, for if ever an able vessel sailed past Eastern Point it was the Nannie O in her younger days. And he did love that vessel! Man, but I mind how his eyes used to shine every time he took a look at her. 'Ain't she able-lookin'?' he'd say, and look around to see that everybody else thought so, too. Even now, looking at her coming in the harbor, you don't have to look twice to see she's an able vessel. And if she's able now, think what she must've been afore she was druv to death. She's got iron hoops around her now from chain-plates to chain-plates, to hold her together for'ard and the signs are on her where she spits out her oakum reg'larly. But this time I'm telling you she was only two year old, and able!—able, I'm telling you, able as Tommie himself, and Tommie was able. He's an able man yet, though gettin' older'n he was."

"How old, Peter?" asked one of the kind that must always have the details of things.

"O Lord, I dunno. I mean old for his age. Lord, he's got just as much fire now as ever he had. You just try to cross his bows once and see. But, anyway, he had the fire in him this time. He was the right age, I call it, for a man to like to take chances—in the middle thirties—not too long married, and restless as a cat if he was so much as a week away from home. He cert'nly was restless that trip—kept things jumping! If you'd only seen the way he drove into that port in Norway—a heavy no'therly gale. We threw her into the wind just long enough to pick up the pilot—I remember him just as well—a big lad all oiled up, and I mind how we gaffed him over the rail like a big, broad-backed halibut, with the salt water runnin' off him. He could talk pretty good English, this lad, like a lot of them Norwegian pilots, and he begins to talk as soon's he's found the deck under his feet. First he sings out to take in tops'ls and reef the mains'l. It'd done you good to seen him wave his hands and give orders. 'You will drown,' says he.

"Drown a dog-fish!" says Tommie. "The Nannie O's carried her tops'ls to here, and she'll carry 'em a few miles farther."

"But she cannot."

"But she can," says Tommie.

"Then I will not—will not—take the responsibility," says the pilot.

"Then you needn't. Who in the name of creation asked you to?" says Tommie. "All you got to do is to stand by and pick out the buoys, an' bime-by collect your fees, and I'll 'tend to the handlin' of her."

It was blowing a livin' gale, mind, in from the no'the'ard, and Tommie druv her in for this queer-named port with four lowers and two tops'ls like you see him comin' past the whistlin' buoy now if you look out the port-hole. There was one of them tourist steamers we passed on the way—one of them big steamers that'd been up to see the midnight sun, I s'pose, and the passengers was huddled up on deck and watchin' us. I mind how some of 'em pulled out their handkerchiefs and waved 'em at us. Oh, but Tommie liked that!

"We oughter have our flag to the main peak," he says, "to show 'em what she is." He looks aloft to see in his mind how the flag'd look, and the more he looks aloft the more ideas he gets. "Yes, and the balloon and stays'l to her—she'd stand it. I know she'd stand it. She's able for it, I know," he says, and he looks up at her topsticks—they was bending then like two whips and some of us was having a cold chill to think he'd try it. But he shakes his head at last. "It'd be like putting on airs, maybe, bein' so close to port. Wouldn't it, Peter?" he says, turnin' to me, though he didn't gen'rally ask for advice, and I said it cert'nly would.

We was getting into the harbor then, which was the other side of an opening where the ends of the two quays didn't quite come together. It was a nice little harbor inside, but crowded this time with all kind of craft, all in from the gale.

"Is there room, do you think, Skipper?" I says when we began to get pretty near.

"Oh, we oughter be able to squeeze in," says Tommie.

"You must not, you must not," says the pilot. He'd been a sort of passenger since we'd got the channel fixed in our minds, but now he was comin' to life again—assertin' his authority like. "You must not, you must not," he says, speakin' up to Tommie.

"Hush," says Tommie.

"But I won't take the responsibility," says he.

"I'll take it off you," says Tommie.

"But I'm pilot," says he.

"But I'm skipper," says Tommie.

"But you must not," says he.

"Mustn't hell," says Tommie, gettin' mad. "Let her swing," he says to me at the wheel. "Give her a full and let her roll!" And through the passage she went flyin' and the waves from under her bows went up against the quays like she was an ocean-liner hooked up.

And when she got in! On the deck of every vessel in the harbor they crowded to see who was the strange schooner comin' in carryin' her tops'ls when everything under sail that day had come in with what they had in the way of lower sails reefed down. Tommie went to the wheel himself and, man, you ought've seen him shoot her! Up she came, and whing! I thought she'd go another quarter-mile the way he slammed her into the wind! And she would have, only just in time he sings out and cl-i-i-nk! over goes the anchor, and whr-r-r—down comes jibs and fores'l, and there we was all standin'. Our mains'l was shakin' in the wind, the reef-points on it crackin' like a hundred whips, but there we was sure enough right in the middle of them all, with their eyes poppin' out at us. "Break out her flag to the main peak and let 'em know what country this one's from," says Tommie. And we flies our ensign, and in a second, from half a dozen steamers 'round us and four or five steam-yachts—if there was one I'll bet there was a hundred people, men and women, flashed out little American flags on sticks and waves 'em up and down like crazy people.

There was a big steam-yacht almost alongside us, and "From what port do you hail?" sings out a fellow from the bridge of her.

"Gloucester," sings out Tommie, with his face flushin' and his eyes shinin' out through the rain and salt water drippin' from his face.

"I knew it, I knew it," sings out the steam-yacht fellow, "only a Gloucester fisherman would do it or could do it. Come aboard, won't you, Captain, and have dinner with me?"

"There's twenty-two of us all told," says Tommie, kind of remindin' him like.

"All right," says the steam-yacht lad—he was game all right—"come aboard, the twenty-two of you," and we went aboard half an hour later, all but the cook, who'd been sent ashore for grub and the letters, and we had dinner in the cabin of the millionaire's yacht.

Well, we was at that dinner, when the talk of yachts and fishermen came up. Tommie'd been telling of some sailin' done by Gloucester fishermen—some fast passages from the Banks mostly. Of course, he didn't forget to tell a few things about his own Nannie O, while he was about it.

One of them Valkyries—some of you here that's always talkin' yachtin'll remember—one of 'em was just then comin' over to race for the America's cup off Sandy Hook.

"Now, how do you think you'd make out with her?" asks this millionaire—a sugar-millionaire he was, I think. "How would your vessel and the Valkyrie make out in a race?"

"An ocean race?" asks Tommie.

"Yes," he answers.

"We wouldn't have to wet our rail," says Tommie.

"How do you make that out?" asks the yachting fellow.

"How else could it be?" says Tommie. "We're built for heavy weather and she ain't. She's aloominum, or some other queer metal, that's about as thick as a coat o' spar-varnish, and we're three-inch oak. She's built to be raced a few times, and then be broke up for old junk, while with us, it's eight or ten years afore a vessel gets real loose—loose so the men have to wear rubber boots in the fore-hold. No, sir, aloominum and three-inch oak ain't the same thing. No, sir, the Nannie was built to stay to sea in North Atlantic winters, and in the worst part of the North Atlantic—the shoals where the fish feeds; but these yachts, so far's I c'n see—they're built 'bout as stiff as window-sashes, and they do most of their cruisin' in sight o' land. Our vessels must be built strong. And in an ocean race now"—Tommie shook his head, sad-like, to think what Gloucester fishermen misses for not gettin' chances in ocean races.

"Would you race your vessel against the Valkyrie—say across the ocean?" asks the yachting sharp, after studyin' Tommie awhile.

"Race the Nannie against the Valkyrie across the ocean?" Tommy looks at the steam-yacht lad like he was somethin' queer came up in the trawls. "Why, if I thought the Nannie O couldn't beat any blessed yacht of her length afloat across the Western Ocean, I'd sell her for a wood-carrier to some Nova Scotia trader—on my life I would. Race her against the Valkyrie across the ocean? Why 'twould be a sin and a shame—why, don't you know these cup-challengers goes over under storm-sail and we've got everything in God's world to put on the Nannie?"

"But if it is light weather, wouldn't she have sail enough to creep along as fast as a fisherman and——"

"Would she creep along?" says Tommie. "And do you cal'late the Nannie can't waltz along in moderate weather, a nine or ten knot breeze now—what?"

"And if it comes heavy weather," goes on the yachting chap, to finish up his argument, "she'll have sail enough, anyway."

Tommie brought his fist down on the table at that so's to make the dishes hop. "Can you, a man that knows enough about the sea to be runnin' a big steam-yacht like this—can you imagine a breeze when I'd be keepin' only storm-sail on the Nannie if I was racin' her? This vessel of mine is a Gloucester fisherman that was built to go halibutin'—to go halibutin', man. Look here, now, when does this Valkyrie leave for America?" Tommie was ready to explode.

"Oh, but you couldn't start with her on even terms," says the yachting lad, "because she's due to leave England to-day. That's what put me in mind of her. She's to leave Plymouth to-day, and that's a thousand, yes twelve hundred miles, nearer America than this place is."

"To-day?" says Tommie. "That's too early. I want to go ashore and send a letter or two home—maybe telegraph the owners. But to-morrow, yes—we'll sail to-morrow. We're bound home, anyway. We only put in here to get grub and ice and water and send letters home. What time to-day will this yacht sail?"

"I don't know exactly. Along in the middle of the day sometime."

"Well, let's average it up and call it twelve o'clock," says Tommie. "Now, to-morrow at noon I swing the Nannie O off for Gloucester. I'll give that boat her ten or twelve hundred mile start, and if I don't beat her across the Western Ocean—ten or twelve hundred mile and all—then you c'n call my vessel any kind of a name you want. The Nannie's whole sail to her storm-sail ought to offset the thousand-mile start. We'll sail the Nannie to Gloucester and they'll sail the Valkyrie to New York. Gloucester may be a couple of hundred mile nearer than New York. But she'll have a thousand miles on us then —which don't matter. Fair wind," says Tommie. "I'm goin' aboard to see what the cook's got for the passage, but to-morrow at twelve you give us your whistle and we'll up jibs and off for Gloucester—and bime-by we'll see."

"If you beat her," says the millionaire, "I'll give you something handsome for the sport of it."

"Never mind the something handsome," says Tommie. "But I'll reach the other side afore her or I'll sink the Nannie O."

"Hooray!" says the steam-yacht lad, "and here's to"—he fills the glasses all around—"what will we drink to now? Come now, Captain, a toast—what'll we drink to?"

"Plenty wind," says Tommie.

And we got plenty wind. We never waited till next day. We goes aboard, Tommie gets a letter from the cook, reads it two or three times, jumps on deck all at once, says, "Break her out," and we turned to. It was blowin' then worse than when we came in. The steam-yacht lad was there on the bridge in his rain-coat. "I say, Captain, I thought you weren't leavin' till to-morrow." he hollers out to Tommie.

"Anything wrong?"

"Nothin' wrong. A letter from home, but nothin' wrong."

She was beginning to pay off then, with Tommie at the wheel, and the millionaire lad walking aft to keep up the talk. He sings out, "Can I cable any message to the other side for you—to the owners, say, to let them know you are coming?"

"The owners—no," says Tommie. "But you might telegraph my wife and tell her I'm on the way home."

"All right. What'll I say?"

"Just say," says Tommie, "'Comin' home,' and sign it 'Tommie.' Just 'Comin' home, Tommie,'—just like that. And send it to Mrs. Tommie Ohlsen, Gloucester."

"Nothing more, Captain?"

"Nothing more," says Tommie.

"But won't I say you're going to hurry? Maybe she'd like to know you're hurrying."

"Don't worry," says Tommie. "She'll know that without writing it down," and he puts the wheel down and swings the Nannie off, and bangs her out the harbor.

So out we goes and from then on we had it. None of you here have been through it—a driver of a skipper making a passage. Some of you, maybe, have heard how they come from the Banks that way, six or eight hundred or a thousand miles, nothin' but a high sea to the lee quarter and a roarin' wake all the way. Well, cert'nly we had it across the Western Ocean that time—four thousand miles, or forty-two hundred I think they said it was from that Norweigian port to Gloucester. Well, we had it—four thousand and odd mile of sea rushin' by, with two men lashed to the wheel, life-lines out, and hatches battened most of the time, everybody on deck hangin' on to something, the lee rail buried gen'rally and once in a while her sheer-poles going under. Day in and day out we had it, the wind singin' through her rigging, boom-jaws creaking, the planks in her deck quiverin', and her mast-heads strainin'. Four thousand and odd mile o' that—it was enough to drive a man crazy. There was some of the gang took to their bunks that pasage just to get away from the strain of it—hauled the blankets over their heads so's they wouldn't have to listen to the everlastin' singin' up on deck. Yes, sir, from her trucks to her keel she was groanin'. But Tommie!—Lord, he enjoyed every foot of that passage. He'd stand on the quarter over by the main rigging, or maybe sometimes aft by the corner of the house for a change. He'd be lookin' for'ard the length of her or over the rail and then up. "Lord," he'd say, "but ain't she be-yoo-ti-ful? the Nannie! And ain't she able? She's cert'nly able, this one!" And he'd shake his head and smile at whoever was to the wheel, and if whoever was to the wheel didn't say she was beautiful and able—if he didn't speak right up and say she was the ablest vessel he ever stood on—if he didn't speak right up, he'd get nothing but black looks from Tommie for the rest of his watch, for Tommie cert'nly loved the Nannie. All he studied that passage was how to keep more sail on her—he did most of his sleeping in the daytime so he could watch her better at night. "It's at night a fisherman gains," he'd say. "Any vessel at all c'n sail in the daytime, but it takes a fisherman to do her best sailin' at night." And of course that's so. Everybody knows if you leave sail on your vessel all night she'll make great gains afore mornin'—that is, if the other fellow is careful and takes some of his off. The way the Nannie'd come along in the dark—ten, eleven, and twelve knots—it warn't nothin'. Thirteen, fourteen—yes, and fifteen knots it was sometimes. The Nannie just eat 'em up, and Tommie walking the deck all night keepin' the sail to her and watchin' her. Whenever he was ready to turn in—he slept about three hours in twenty-four all the way across—the last thing he'd say afore his head went down the cabin steps'd be, "Keep what sail she's got on her now and call me if it moderates." Most skippers I sailed with used to say afore they turned in to call 'em if it breezed up, but Tommie used to say to call him if it moderated. Though we wouldn't need to call him even then. If ever she stopped her leapin' for two minutes he could feel the change in his sleep. Her gettin' back on a more even keel used to roll him away from the lee corner of his bunk, I s'pose, and in another minute he'd be on deck.

There was an ungodly big stays'l Tommie was forever wantin' to see on the Nannie, and I mind we must've been half-way across one day, when he took it into his head that the Nannie'd look perfectly beautiful with that stays'l up there between the top-m'sts. That was the day he put her under the nose of the big liner. Wait till I tell you about the liner. "Here's one of them ocean liners comin', and I know they'll be watching us," Tommie said when he first sighted her, "and we might's well show 'em how an American vessel c'n sail." So up goes the stays'l. From her trucks half-way to the deck it came, and filled all the space fore and aft between the masts. Tommie looks for'ard—the Nannie was most buryin' herself afore he put the stays'l on her at all—but with the stays'l on her, why, she was sailin' mostly on her ear. "Skipper!" says Albert Frazer to the wheel with me—both of us lashed to the wheel, me to the wind'ard with a line to the starboard bitt, and him to looard with a line to the port bitt—"if that don't take the spars out of her it'll cert'nly throw her down," says Albert. "Hush, boy," says Tommie, "hush, boy—not the Nannie." And he looks aloft. "But she do look be-yoo-ti-ful with that stays'l, don't she?" And he looks aloft again, and then ahead to the liner. "And here's the liner comin'. I'll bet they're sayin' aboard her now, 'By the Lord, but there's an able vessel!' and pointing their glasses at us, I'll bet, and wonderin' who we are." He'd hardly got that out, standin' back by the corner of the house just the other side of me, when qu-r-r—and the Nannie shivered. Qu-r-r—it came again and she takes a lurch, and all but flat on her side she went. The three of us aft, Tommie, Albert, and myself, was taken off our feet. Me and Albert, being lashed, was all right—we stayed aboard. I was slammed over the wheel-box, and Albert into the lee scuppers, but Tommie, not bein' lashed to anything, he goes over the rail. I didn't see him goin', bein' almost drowned myself, but when I looked up he was gone. I hollers, and in a second Albert hollers back. "All right," he says, and there he was with just a-hold of Tommie's wrist, and Tommie a-hold of the rail, but bein' dragged under the Nannie's overhang. 'Twas nothing but his awful grip saved him. The fingers of one hand hung onto the rail all the time. That awful strength in them wrists and fingers of his saved him. Well, he climbs aboard. "By the Lord," says he, "but there's the devil's own suction under that overhang." And that's all the thought he gives it. We was worryin' then about the Nannie—afraid she was goin' to roll clean over, and stay over maybe—but no. Just as Tommie climbs back over the rail she stops rollin' down, and Tommie grabbin' the wheel quick, she begins to come up fine. She was all right again in about two minutes, but her rails was hardly beginnin' to show signs of raisin' again afore Tommie begins to talk again. "Quite a squall that, Skipper," I says. "Squall? 'Twasn't a squall did that, Peter. An unlucky sea, an unlucky sea, Peter." He wouldn't give in, that them sails was too much for the Nannie. "If 'twas any other vessel," he goes on, "she'd been hove down altogether. Shoot her under the bow of that liner—give her a full now!" he says, "and let's see what she'll do. Let her swing now!" he says, "and let's see what she'll do. By the Lord, but she's able—any other vessel and she would been floating keel up on the water now—yes, sir, her keel up. Yes, sir, any other vessel. You and Albert let her have it now, Peter."

Well, we let her have it again, and Lord! but the wind roared into her. Wh-sh—it went, and wh-sh-sh—it went—and then wh-sh-sh and wh-r-r-up it went all at once, and away went that ungodly stays'l. "Thank the Lord!" says Albert. "Amen," says I—but behind Tommie's back both of us, you better b'lieve. Tommie looks up after the stays'l floatin' half way up to the sky and eyes it sad-like. "By the Lord," he says, "but the firm ought to change their sailmaker. Ain't it a shame?" he says, "and we were goin' along so fine, too—and strangers lookin' at her." And turning to us at the wheel, "Well, we got to make the best of it, I s'pose; watch this fellow ahead now, and when I sing out, put the wheel up and shoot the Nannie under her nose." And under the very nose of her we sent the Nannie flyin'. Not much closer could we get without us or her gettin' in trouble—most likely us.

They crowds for'ard on the liner to get a look at us. We must've been a sight for what few passengers was peekin' down on us over the rail. Albert and me to the wheel was buried to our waists, and the skipper hangin' on to the main riggin'—on the lee riggin' so's to be nearer the liner—standin' to his shoulders most in the wash comin' over the rail. On the bridge of the liner one of the officers holds up a megaphone and points it down on Tommie. "Lucky for you that sail blew out, Captain," he hollers. "Lucky hell," hollers back Tommie—Tommie didn't need any megaphone. "That stays'l!—this one'd carry four stays'ls if there was spars enough to hang 'em on to." And you oughter seen the lads on the bridge poke their eyes at him. "Yes," says Tommie, lookin' back—we was leapin' past her quarter then—"yes," says Tommie, "look at us. You're 600 and odd feet long, and eight times 'round your house is a mile, and you think you're the only thing that sails the sea. Three stacks and two screws, and you're thinkin' you could take us aboard and not so much as crowd the saloon-passengers on the promenade-deck. And so you could, and your bridge is as high as our mast-head, but the Nannie don't need any steam-gear to get her home, and she'll carry her four lowers when you're rollin' funnels under." He waves his arm in contempt at the liner. "Lucky we lost our stays'l, is it?" And for an hour afterward you could hear him sputterin', "Lucky for the Nannie the stays'l blew out, was it? Lucky for this one, was it?" The sparks kept comin' out of him for an hour after the lad on the bridge of the liner had spoke his piece about the Nannie and her stays'l.

And that's the way we came drivin' across the Western Ocean that passage. Never less than four lowers, no matter how it blowed, but more gen'rally with both tops'ls and sometimes with the big balloon. The skipper, he'd be standin' on the quarter or aft, as I said, with one eye aloft like a gimlet all the time, to see how the Nannie's spars was standin' it. The other eye'd be ahead watchin' for I don't know what, unless it was a sight of the Valkyrie, though if ever he really expected to get a sight of her I can't say, for once we was clear of that Norwegian port, from one end of the psasage to the other, I never heard him say one word about her. There was something else on his mind. He'd look to the chart every noon after he'd take a sight—that's whenever the sun'd be out, which it warn't more'n half the time—a look at the log and the compass to check up, and then, "So many days out and we're so far. A fair average now, and we'll be home in so many days"—him figuring it up on the slate that he'd bring up out the cabin and lay on top the house, where there wasn't too much loose water atop of it.

Leavin' Norway, he didn't expect to make the passage in less than three weeks. I heard him say that myself. He never looked at that time of the year for a better chance than that. And three weeks is good sailin', let me tell you, for that distance with everyday luck in the way o' wind. If it had been in winter now he'd nach'rally count on plenty o' wind all the way over, but it was too much luck to expect it this time. But we got the wind, and the Nannie kept a-goin', and the average kept a-raisin'. When we started out I remembered he said 200 miles a day wouldn't be bad, but toward the end of it, seein' himself goin' along so fine, he begins to get nervous. "This fine breeze'll die out," he began to say when we was beginnin' to near this side, "this fine breeze'll die out and maybe we won't make such a fine pasage after all."

He comes up on deck one day with a book of all kinds of sporting-records along with his sextant, and says, "Ever since my first trip on the Nannie O, and I found she was a devil to sail, it's been deep in my heart to break all the best of those Atlantic records if ever I got a chance, and now I've got a chance—and a reason. Yes, by the Lord, a reason." What he meant by a reason we couldn't guess, unless it was beatin' the Valkyrie, when he seemed to've forgotten all about, or beatin' old clipper-ship records, which all at once seemed to interest him. He looks a lot of 'em over, readin' 'em to himself, till he comes to the Western Ocean passages.

"Here it is, here's a dog of a record," he hollers out. "Here's a record—an old clipper-ship record from Liverpool to Boston—the western passage—twelve days and six hours. That's sailin' for you, that's sailin'. Some of those old clippers were dogs, warn't they? They cert'nly was. Now twelve days and six hours from Liverpool to Boston—chart the distance—that'll be how long for our passage from northern Norway?" We figures it out on the slate and tells him—seventeen days as near as we could figure it. "Seventeen days is it?" he says. "By the Lord, we'll beat that a day and that'll be sailin'—sixteen days. Let's see now. We're fourteen days to here this noon. Call it noon, anyway—only a few minutes now to twelve o'clock. I'll take a sight and see where we are. And d'y' know, but I wouldn't be surprised, but if this breeze hold's out, we'll give that clipper-ship record a good beatin'?"

"But, Skipper, she was a 1,500-ton square-rigger," speaks up somebody; "a big brute of a square-rigger."

"What's the odds if she was 15,000-ton, and rigged triangular, so long's we beat her?" says Tommie.

"In this little one—a 120-ton?" says the growlin' lad again.

"Yes, in this little one. What difference does it make so she sails, and let me tell you she ain't too little to try it," says Tommie, beginnin' to get mad, and nobody said any more about that.

He takes a sight, and gets out the chart and finds we're half way between the Grand Banks and Quero, somewheres to the southerly edge of Saint Peer Bank too. About 650 miles—that's sea miles—from home then, and fourteen days out.

"Six hundred and fifty miles and forty-eight hours to go. She'll make it," says Tommie, "the Nannie'll make it. Let this breeze hold out and we'll make her make it. All hands come aft now and listen to me. Split yourselves into two gangs and stand by from now on to trim sheets night and day. No more card-playin' fore or aft, no more takin' it easy in your bunks when you're not on watch. From this out no more sleep for anybody aboard this one—not until we get into Gloucester. And if there's anybody ain't in oilskins he'd better get into them, for it's wet decks and everybody standin' by from now on. No more sail comes down unless it blows down. There's your orders if I'm not on deck any time," he says, and looks around to make sure everybody heard him. "Sway up," he says, and we begins to sway up. Everybody heaves away on the halyards, and when we couldn't pull in another inch, when everything was flat as boards, he goes around deck and takes an extra half-hitch to every halyard. "Now they won't slip," he says, and there was the divil in his eye.

That night in a thick o' fog we ran by Sable Island. We must've gone pretty close to the no'the-east bar because one time we found ourselves in twenty fathom of water. That soundin' worried some of us, but not the Skipper. "Will we hold her up," we says. "Lord, no," he says, "keep her goin'. Straight courses makes short passages. If we go seesawing all over the ocean, there's no tellin' when we'll get home. Never mind this bit o' shoal water, keep her goin'." And we kept her goin', listening for the surf because we knew we'd never see the light in that fog. Straight to the west'ard we druv her, and some time afore mornin' it must've been we went by the no'the-west bar, because at daybreak we could make out a surf under our lee quarter, and that couldn't be anything but the no'the-west bar.

From there we got the fairest kind of a slant. "Wing her out for Cape Sable," says Tommie. And we wung her out, and down the Cape shore she flew, with the ten dories in her waist as good's a stuns'l to her. It came thick o' fog again and all the way along the Nannie was goin' it blind. Drivin' by the no'-therly edge of La Have we thought we might fall foul o' somebody, but not a smell of a sail did we get till we almost ran into a three-masted schooner layin' to anchor just to the east'ard of Cape Sable. Layin' to an anchor she was, mind you, and we swingin' both tops'ls. We was comin' along, all foam and smoke then, and couldn't see the length of the vessel, when all at once we heard voices and then almost under our bowsprit was this big three-master. We whipped the Nannie clear in time to save her—or maybe to save both of us—I don't know how. I only know we was close enough to brush her paint if anybody on deck happened to have a brush as we went wingin' by—and then we heard a voice sayin'—you c'n hear a voice sometimes in the fog when you can't see anybody—the voice said, "I'll be dinged if I don't just thought I saw a little two-masted schooner goin' by with everything on."

"Everything on?" said another voice, "in this breeze?"—and we could hear him laugh—"saw a ghost, I guess."

Tommie was listening to it. "A ghost?" he says. "By the Lord, if this one'd go into you, head on, you wouldn't think it was any ghost—if ever she hit you, head on. A ghost? Huh, 'cause they can't carry sail themselves they don't think anybody else can. Have an ear out for the whistle now, boys, for we're pretty close in-shore, I think."

It was the Cape Sable whistling-buoy he meant, but we didn't have to listen for the whistle because the fog lifted not long after we passed the coaster to an anchor, and the lighthouse itself stood out clear enough. At five o'clock, or maybe a little later in the afternoon, we came tearin' up abreast of it and then we straightened her out for home. "The home-leg, boys," says Tommie, "west, half no'the, and drive her—drive her, drive her—by the Lord, DRIVE HER!" He snaps his big arm across his body like he was tryin' to snap a whip. Man, man, but she went along! That was a run that one, from Cape Sable to Gloucester on the Nannie that time. Two hundred and twenty-five mile they call it, sea-mile of course, and the Nannie made it in something over fourteen hours. 'Twas nothin' but the air above her deck full o' mist from the foam under her rail. Man, but she did lay down to it. She fair smoked. "The Nannie always could sail on her side," said Tommie, watchin' her—"always could." There was a big coaster runnin' out from the Bay of Fundy just afore dark. She was under two jibs and reefed fores'l—just wallerin' she was. "What you doin' out in a day like this?" hollers Tommie. Gettin' near home was makin' him feel playful. They looks over the rail at us again and one of 'em hollers as we went swingin' by. "Go it, you crazy Gloucesterman. Keep on and you'll find bottom some day," but Tommie only laughed at him. That was just afore dark.

Early in the morning, when we could almost smell Cape Ann, we overhauled a tramp-steamer. She was pluggin' along about nine or ten knots an hour, I should say. There was a grouchy-lookin', bushy-whiskered fellow on her bridge, duckin' his head to the breeze and the rain. We went by him like he was goin' the other way. "Any message?" says Tommie, and he leaned back interested-like to get the answer. "Any message?" says Tommie—"we're goin' home."

"Goin' to hell, more likely," says the fellow on the bridge.

"Not in the Nannie O," laughs Tommie, "but if we was we'd report you comin'," and he laughs again.

He was all jokes on that home-stretch, but it was desp'rate, just the same, the way he druv her. "We'll make it, we'll make it—sixteen days," he kept sayin' all the way along. He'd never so much as winked an eye from the time he first took the extra half-hitches the other side of Quero, and he was watchin' out now like two men. He was the first man to raise the lights on Thatcher's. There was two others to the masthead with him, but the others said afterward that he made out the lights ten minutes afore they did, and, leanin' against the back-stay, he looked his fill. For five minutes he didn't look away, and, comin' slidin' down to deck, he said, "We're most home, most home," he said; that was all, but there was a wonderful content in his eyes, and the way he said it!

The rocks of old Cape Ann hove in sight, and then, rounding Eastern Point, Tommie took the wheel himself. "We'll surprise 'em," he says, and druv her into the harbor as if she had another 4,000 miles to go and not a minute to lose. It was whing—bang—past the whistling-buoy, a leg across and a leg back. Even in the inner harbor the way he held her nose to it was a scandal. "Might's well keep her goin'," he says, and he lashes her like a race-horse clear up to her berth off the owner's dock. The way he came in past the point a while ago ain't nothin' to it. Whing—bang—it was—in with tops'ls, down with jibs, let go anchor, down with fores'l, let the mains'l stand—"And there she is," says Tommie, "the able Nannie O, with the fastest 4,000 and a couple o' hundred mile ever charged to a vessel across the Western Ocean. What time by the Gloucester clock for'ard?" The clock in the fo'c's'le'd been set to Gloucester time and never changed since we left home, and that's what he meant when he asked the time by the Gloucester clock.

"Half-past seven," came the answer.

"Half-past seven—nigh five hours yet to sixteen days—and that's sailin'!"

Man, but his eyes were shinin'. "We'll go ashore now," he says, "and get the news." And we goes ashore. He was for hurryin' off himself, but we asked him to inquire about the Valkyrie—seein' we made such a drive of it we wanted a little satisfaction, and so he inquires, "Any word of that yacht that's comin' over to race for the America's cup," he asks.

Not in yet, they told him, but she'd been reported by four or five big ocean liners as bein' on the way. They tells him how two of 'em reported her hove-to—in longitude so-and-so and latitude so-and-so, they said.

"What day was that," asks Tommie, and they reckons it up and tells him.

"Hove-to that day!" says Tommie. "Why, man, that Nannie carried both tops'ls that day. What else?"

And they tells him on such-and-such a day she was reported by another steamer in longitude so-and-so and latitude so-and-so, and makin' heavy weather of it.

Tommie reckons that up. "Why," says he, "that must-'ve been the day afore we blew out that rotten stays'l. That day! why, that day we had the stays'l and balloon both on her. That day! why, that day the gang was playin' draw down for'ard, and I mind some of 'em sayin', when we was eatin' dinner, how it was the first day in a week they didn't have to put weights on the silver change to keep them from hoppin' off the table. Good Lord!" says Tommie, "but there's none of 'em fit to carry ice for the Nannie—she's cert'nly an able vessel. But I must be gettin' along home," and he goes up the street at a fourteen-knot clip.

That was all well and good. The Valkyrie got in a week later, though Tommie warn't payin' any more attention to her, by that time, than if he'd never heard of her. There was a new baby up to his house, and he was taken up with that. But the millionaire lad, when he heard of it, was tickled to death and soon's he got over on this side, in the fall, he comes into Gloucester to see Tommie, and he gave him the finest——

"Peter, Peter," interrupted the one volunteer lookout who had not abandoned his post, "ain't this the Nannie's captain comin' up the dock? Ain't this Tommie himself?" The inquirer's voice was suppressed with excitement.

"Ha?" exclaimed Peter, hopping for the port-hole—"a stout, round man, but not fat—an able-looking man—lemme see. Yes, that's him. That's Tommie himself. Wait a minute till I hail him. Maybe he'll come up, and then you c'n get a good look at an able seaman. And maybe he'll tell us about this last trip—I'll bet he druv her. Hi——" Peter threw back the hatch covers. "Hi-i—Captain Ohl-sen—Good Lord, but what a breeze—he'll never hear me—hi-i—Cap-tain Ohl-sen——"

"Hi—" came back from the man below. "Hi, Peter—that you?"

"Yes. What kind of a trip did you have?"

"Ha?" called back the voice.

"What—kind—of—a—trip—did—you—have?"

"What?"

"What—kind—of—a—trip—oh, I can't make you hear in this gale. Won't you come up, Captain?" Peter motioned with his arm, the man below waved back, and Peter drew in his head and hauled the hatches to again. "He'll be here now in a minute. Get off the locker two of three of you loafers, in case Tommie'd like to sit down for a minute. Maybe he'll stop long enough to tell us about his last passage—he must've come home flyin'. Here he comes. Hear him comin' up the stairs? Climbs to the mast-head like that. Can't you imagine him puttin' his feet down, every step a ratline and a swing from one side to the other. Hush."

From below the level of the top step of the flight of stairs leading into the room, he came gradually into view—head, shoulders, body, and legs successively appeared. When he was all up and inside he fitted admirably the picture drawn of him by Peter—round head, round neck, round body, round legs, round all over, but not a pound of fat, eyes deep-set and very blue, jaw salient, skin red-tanned. Master mariner he was, master mariner he looked, and once he stepped within the room the loungers of Crow's Nest paid him that which was their rarest homage—a deferential silence.

In two glances he took in the room. One swept the walls—the charts, glasses, sporting-prints, and models of vessels hung or tacked thereto; the second—a return glance—measured up the crowd.

"I don't see that last T Wharf flyer here, Peter—the one they tell me's been raisin' hell among the haddockin' fleet. And some of the old faces gone, too, Peter. Gone to work? Which? No? Lord, Lord, but queer things happens. Well, forty thousand halibut, ten thousand cod, and five thousand or so mixed—haddock, hake, and one thing and another. No, boy, no, keep your seat—I'll be goin' along in a minute. What's new, Peter?"

"Nothing much. Forty thousand halibut, ten thousand—let me put that down afore I forget it. There. What kind of weather'd you have, Captain?"

"Oh, moderate. A beat out most the way, but a fair wind back."

"Must've been fair comin' home, Captain, an' plenty of it. Wallie Manning reported you not goin' to leave till Saturday night, and only Tuesday mornin' now."

"That's right—fair as a man could ask comin' home. Seven hundred and fifty mile to the east'ard when we swung her off an' raised Thatcher's in fifty-nine hours—not bad that now, was it?"

"That's fine goin', Captain. And they say she ain't in her best trim now, too? She must've come right along?"

"Y'oughter seen her, Peter. Lord, Peter, there's no stoppin' the Nannie once she starts to come. She's a credit to the people that built her—that vessel."

"Blowin' much?"

"Well, not real heavy. She carried both tops'ls all the way."

"I thought I saw you swingin' 'em both clear past the Point?"

"Till we threw her into the wind and let go our anchor."

"But Wallie said he most got hove-down comin' across the Bay of Fundy."

"He did? But what can you expect in a breeze with that one he's got. She c'n drift 'bout's fast as any vessel I know—she ain't half bad in a light breeze—no, I don't s'pose there's too many of 'em c'n get away with her in one of them palm-leaf zephyrs. But what'd Wallie have to say?—he gen'rally carries home a bit of gossip."

"Oh, nuthin' much, except to report you and two or three others. He says he did ketch the divil comin' across the Bay o' Fundy, though."

"Did he?—comin' across the Bay of Fundy, eh? That'd be—when'd you say he got in? Yesterday noon? That'd be about the night before last when he most got hove down, wouldn't it? Let me see now—where was the Nannie then? Night before last—Sunday——. Comin' across Western Bank we was then—yes. Somewhere's to the south'ard of Sable Island we was. Blowin' hard where he was, did he say? Well, where we was there was just wind enough to wet the Nannie's rail. Well, to be fair, maybe we was takin' a bucket or two on deck now and again. Of course the vessels makes a difference. When the Nannie'd be just dippin' her rail the Cleopatra'd be about hove down, wouldn't she? Yes. But any word of George Hawley, Peter? No? Well, I didn't think there would be. Another good old wagon that one he's got—the Sea-Horse. Where d'y's'pose he ever got the name? It must've been about three o'clock Sunday afternoon that he came gallopin' along bound to the west'ard. He said somethin' about the Nannie an' the Sea-Horse, and I asked him wouldn't he wait and I'd put the dories right out an' haul the trawls. 'I can't leave them ten skates o' gear out there, you know, George—can't you wait a little while?' I says. 'No,' says George, 'this one's got the bit in his teeth'—talks like that on account of the name, I s'pose. 'Got the bit between his teeth,' says George, 'but I'll report you.' 'Will you?' says I. 'You're good-natured as hell, but the Nannie'll do her own reportin' this trip.' 'Yes?' he says—like that—'yes-s?' like that. 'Yes,' I says, 'the Nannie'll report herself this trip, and if there's one vessel the Nannie beats home this passage, that vessel'll be the Sea-Horse.' It was beginning to breeze up then and when we swung off that night it was a fine fresh no'the-easter. The Nannie hopped along pretty lively, and, knowin' the Nannie was comin' along behind, George must've been sockin' it to the Sea-Horse. He's hobblin' along the road somewhere now, I s'pose, with the bit still between his teeth. Any word of the Lalla Rookh?"

"Not a word."

"No? I thought it'd be that way. Another good, old chariot, the Lalla Rookh. I s'pose if we had a magic glass an' could get a look, we'd see her rollin' along somewhere between here and Cape Sable. Just afore dark, Saturday night, we made her out 'bout's far to the south'ard's we c'd see—goin' about as straight west as she c'd go with her four lowers—about all she c'd stand up under. Well, I must be goin'. Forty thousand halibut, ten thousand cod, and five thousand mixed, and tell the old man, Peter, to get a place for the Nannie on the railway to-morrow mornin'. I told Wallie about the fore gaff, and I expect he's spoke of that. I wonder did he tell 'em up to the house that I'd be home pretty soon after him—I expect he has."

"I expect he has, Captain. I saw your wife this mornin' when I was coming by the house. She was out in the yard, with a boy to each side of her, and the baby aloft. She said she'd word o' you from Captain Manning, but she'll hardly be expectin' you to-day, will she?"

"Will she? Won't she? You don't know her, Peter. She's always expectin' me if there's any reason. There's a couple of the children fresh-washed and out on the front steps now, I'll bet—out where they c'n see me soon's I turn the corner—a pair of 'em peekin' over the rail, and the littlest fellow inside with his nose flattened against the pane—all keepin' watch. To the mast-head of a seiner they won't be lookin' any harder for mackerel than them children for me, once they hear I'm on the way. And one of 'em has a birthday to-day, Peter. Don't you know I didn't drive the Nannie for nothing this time, Peter? He's just that cute he knows there oughter be somethin' comin' to him on his birthday. He's been askin' his mother, I know, and his mother's been tellin' him whether to expect me home or not. And he'll have the chart out and marked off the Nannie's passage on it, and showing it to the next younger—yes. His mother put 'em up to that. She pitches into me, though, for carryin' sail. 'Tommie,' she'll say, 'Tommie, why do you?' She gets reports from other skippers' wives, d'y' see. 'You must not, Tommie.' She says that, Peter, but, good Lord, Peter, you know women. If she thought for a second that I wouldn't pull the spars out the Nannie to get home a night sooner, why she'd—well, you know women, Peter. At your age, you know——"

"I expect I know as much as the next, Captain, though that ain't too much, but I know more about the other thing—sail-carryin'—Captain. I was only just now tellin' about that passage you made from Norway that time. That was a passage!"

"Warn't it?" The sudden smile made him look a most genial man.

"And you cert'nly did give the Valkyrie the divil that time, Skipper."

"The Valkyrie—the Valkyrie, Peter?"

"Why, yes, the cup-challenger."

"Oh, the yacht! Oh, her. But that warn't no fair race. We was bound to beat her, we carryin' everything and they soakin' along so's not to wrack her for the cup-races. And we not carin' how we get home so long's we got home. Lord, Peter, but I just had to make a passage that time—I just had to. It's tough, I tell you, to think of your wife havin' all the trouble alone—you not there to stand by. 'By the Lord!' I said to myself, 'but here's somethin' to race for. The yacht? I'll lose her!' It was worth sinkin' the Nannie—and the Nannie's a good vessel—just to see her face when I stepped in the room. Yes, sir, she thought I was a thousand miles away, and still a-comin'. And do you mind the christenin', Peter? Warn't it a christenin', though? Tom O'Donnell said it made him think of bein' back in Galway. But I must be goin', Peter. The wife, d'ye' see, will be half-expectin' maybe to see me turn the corner any minute to-day, knowin' I left for home Saturday night, as Wallie told her. And to-day is the little lad's birthday, too—the same little lad that was born the day I got home from Norway. The same lad, and he'll have the chart out and be helpin' the Nannie along." His smile was now a transfiguration. "And that's why I'll have to hurry along. Of course, a man with as many children's I've got now couldn't run home so's to hit every birthday comes along, but when there's a chance—when you're filled up and a little drivin' 'll get you home in time—why, a man might's well carry a bit, mightn't he? 'You oughter be more careful,' the wife says—she says, but Lord, Peter, d'y' think for a minute that she wants me to let any vessel that sails the sea out-carry the Nannie—named after herself, too, and she Irish? Not her, Peter, not her. No, sir, and I always expect, so long's a spar'll stay in the Nannie, to keep her goin', if it's on a home passage. Well, I must be goin'. When I get started, I want to talk all day. Good-by, Peter—report me to the office. Good-by, all," and down the stairs he went.

With the disappearance of the sturdy physique, the round legs, round body, round neck, and round head, with the last sight of the wavy hair below the rim of the hat, the entire gang in Crow's Nest relaxed and took full breaths again.

Peter first broke the silence. He took an extra long puff on his pipe, before taking it from his lips to speak. "Well, you've seen Tommie. And now do you b'lieve me when I tell you that no skipper out o' Gloucester ever made him take his mains'l in? I mind now the time, in my fishin' days on the Nannie, when I said to myself, 'Peter, if ever you see home again you're the lucky man. If ever you walk Main Street again you c'n bet somebody's been prayin' for you.' The times I said that, and b'lieved it, yes—b'lieved it till I turned 'round and looked at Tommie. He'd be aft—buried to his waist maybe—but there he'd be and I'd get a good look at him. All I c'd see of his face'd be the eyes and the jaw—his eyes and jaw stickin' out—the jaw like the counter of the Nannie. But that's all a man'd want to see, them eyes and that jaw. Lord almighty! but he's a man to tie your hopes o' Heaven to, is Tommie Ohlsen in a blow. Yes, sir, the sight o' Tommie Ohlsen standin' aft on the Nannie in one of them winter gales—man, man, it's like another anchor."

"I'll bet he's a dog!" came explosively from one of the gang.

"Maybe he ain't! And did you see the walk of him?" was the sympathetic chime of another. "It made me feel seasick just to see him heave himself across the floor, and when he shot his eyes my way, why——"

"Hush, now, and lemme see"—Peter was back to work again—"what was it he said? Wait now—oh, yes, here it is. Forty thousand halibut, ten thousand—ring up, one of you and report that—the Nannie O, Captain Tommie Ohlsen, in from Grand Banks with forty thousand halibut, ten thousand cod, and five thousand mixed fish. Got that? All right—hold on now—don't forget about a place on the railway for the Nannie to-morrow. If they asks what's the matter with her say you don't know. Captain Ohlsen was in such a hurry, say to 'em, that he forgot to say what was the matter with her."

"It will be her oakum, won't it, Peter?" queried a well-versed one from the lockers.

"Most likely—some calkin' she needs. It's gen'rally calkin' when she don't want new spars. "Goes up on the railway every other trip now, the Nannie does, and she's gettin' old, some of them'll tell you but—she's a pretty able vessel yet—a pretty able vessel yet—and the skipper that can drive her is Tommie Ohlsen when he wants to make a passage—which he gen'rally does about every time he swings her off for home. Wait till I light my pipe, now; there"—puff—puff, "He's cert'nly a dog—is Tommie Ohlsen—only some day he won't come home. Just a lee-tle too long he'll hang on some day, and Tommie Ohlsen won't come home any more. No, sir, for all this able seamanship, some day Tommie Ohlsen won't come home any more."

Puff—puff—went Peter, while the others, studying him, began to figure out the kind of a gale it would have to be when Tommie Ohlsen would fail to come home. It would need to be a gale that—indeed yes. But puff—puff—went Peter, and removing his pipe ominously he said it again, softly, looking at the stove and as if to himself, "And some day Tommie Ohlsen won't come home any more." They hearkened to that, even as they hearkened to the gale that still raged outside, and for a time they were quieter than ever. "It would have to be the awful gale that—it cert'nly would." They all agreed to that and were downcast. But hope subdued is a buoyant thing. They had seen the man himself, and "Shucks," said one, "I'd like to see the gale that he couldn't stand off—with an able vessel under him. It never came out the ocean, I don't believe—the gale that would send Tommie Ohlsen to the bottom—not with the Nannie O under him—no, sir,"—and "Shucks" burst out a chorus, "that's right. Not Tommie Ohlsen—why, all Gloucester knew him—Lord, yes." And just then the sun streaming through the open port-hole of Crow's Nest added its cheerful suggestion of everlasting hope.

# XIII

## THE HARSH WORD

Martin Rush had come forward for his usual mug-up before turning in. Piling down after him came his bunk-mate, almost his shadow, little Eddie Foy. "M-m—but it's some cold on deck!" ejaculated Eddie, ere yet his feet hit the forec's'le floor.

"Yes," assented Martin, taking a coffee mug from off a nail in the grub-locker the meanwhile, "yes, a man astray to-night in a dory he'll cert'nly thrash his arms across his breast afore mornin'." And then directing his voice toward the cook, "Louder, boy, louder."

For a New Year's gift somebody had given the cook an advertising calendar, one of those thick pad-like affairs with each date in large numerals on a separate sheet, at the foot of which in small type were various praiseworthy sentiments. It was from these that the cook, in an almost inaudible voice, was reading. As he finished one he would tear it off with a flourish and pass on to the next. Martin, now leisurely pouring the hot coffee from the boiler on the stove, added, "Louder, Charlie, louder. Let's all hear."

"Ah-h—to hell with 'em!" suddenly exploded the cook. "Look, Martin—you can't have two days runnin' of them, the things worth readin', and gran' sayin's some of them be, when the third day'll come a lot of stuff about their ottermobiles. People who'd play that on you will make machines, I'll bet, that'd break down just when you was countin' most on 'em—goin' down a steep hill or maybe with a gully a thousand fathom deep to your rail."

"Mind a man of the weather, wouldn't it?" put in Eddie Foy, "which'll come along fair and promisin' for a few days, till you come to put trust in it, and then one day you get caught out——"

"G-g-g—" gasped the cook—"G-g-g—" and took to tearing off the sheets rapidly. "Two, three, four—who the hell wants to hear about their old machines?—nine, ten, e-leven. I s'pose I might's well set it for t'morrer. There—twelve. Feb'uary the twelfth."

"Hah?" Martin, who had seated himself on the locker next the cook's bunk, now slewed his body half around to take heed of the cook. "The twelfth, did y' say, Charlie?" and after peering into the bunk to see for himself, said softly, "Sure enough, the twelfth." And yet more softly, gazing abstractedly into his but half-consumed mug of coffee while he spoke, "February the twelfth—a year to-morrow," and, turning to his chum, "D'y' mind it, Eddie?"

Eddie looked in puzzlement at Martin, and then, he, too, recollecting, with tender tone answered, "Aye, Martin, so 'tis—a year to-morrow. Poor Bushie!"

There were those to whom the whole truth was not known, and so the story told this winter's night by Martin Rush in the brightness and warmth of the schooner's forec's'le.

A boy to love was Bushie; but from that very first summer trip he made he did things that'd go to show he was never intended for a fisherman. 'Twasn't alone that matter of the swordfish. That was when we were single-dory trawling on Le Have, and there was Bushie all by himself, nobody to advise him, when he runs foul of this great creature—just got a peek at him when down he goes, half a tub of trawls tangled up with him, and Lord knows how many fathom down, before Bushie's waked up to it he's hooked anything at all. And then Bushie, poor boy, never any great hand with an oar, sets out to tow him to the vessel two miles against wind and tide—for hours we c'd see him comin', and while he was yet a cable's length away we could hear him shouting: "The taykle—the taykle!" he kept yelling.

"What is it?" we called out.

"A swordfish!" he yells. "A monster! All of a thousand pound. A good afternoon's work—swordfish ten cents a pound when we left home. The taykle; the taykle!"

Such pride there was in him that it was a joy just to look and listen to him. And when he comes alongside we put the dory tackle to him and hoist away. Up comes something nigh as long as the dory, but when it breaks out o' water and the gang has a look at it!

"A swordfish!" says one. "A swordfish!" roars another. And the skipper? "He cert'nly looks to weigh a thousand pounds," says the skipper, "but we won't stop to weigh him." And every one that could grabs a fork or a gaff handle or a deck broom and starts to welt that swordfish over the head. A swordfish? No, but as ugly a hammer-headed shark as ever a man laid eyes on, and poor Bushie stood by 'most ready to cry, with never a word out of him while the gang walloped his prize till they were weary.

Bushie was the kind that took little things like that to heart, and some of 'em poked so much fun at him, especially two chaps, Addicks and Indry, that he didn't follow up that first trip on the *Cygnet.* And it was six months or more again before we, or most of us, anyway, saw him again, and then it was plain what was drivin' him. He was starvin', for in the cold weather, d'y' see, there wasn't so much doin' for Bushie around the docks, and so one day he came down to our vessel—he'd heard we were a man short—got his courage up and came down, summer clothes still on him, to see if he could get a chance on the *Cygnet.* Poor boy, his stomach was bending in for the want of good food, and his teeth were clicking with the cold. Well, he didn't get an over and above average encouragement, everybody knowin' what a poor hand he was in a dory; and there was this Addicks 'specially that couldn't abide him at all. "H-m," he says, "the lad that caught the swordfish. Give *him* a chance? Why, he's about as much use as a passenger. Maybe he'll get another swordfish and be roaring, 'The taykle! the taykle!' again. 'All of a thousand pound; I see the twin fins of him!'" and Addicks starts to roarin', and everybody roars. And yet 'twarn't so black a mark against a green man.

"Well," the skipper says, "what d'y' think, Martin?" and I said—God forgive me, now, but I meant well—I says, "Give the poor boy a chance," and the skipper, a good-hearted man, after a while said: "All right; get your bag and come aboard," but he jumped aboard as he was. Bag? He didn't have a second shirt to his back, and the shirt he had was nothing for winter weather. Of course we helped him out—one a shirt, another drawers; here a pair of mitts, and there an oilskin. But when he was all fitted out he lacked a lot of bein' properly rigged for winter fishin'!

Now, there was a little something else behind Addicks and Indry's opposition, only it didn't come out till later. This lad, Bushie, you see, had the most takin' way with him. You'd laugh at him and you'd lecture him, but you couldn't help likin' him. The girls, 'specially, took the greatest fancy to him. And that was the case with a couple that Indry and Addicks had been tryin' to get to wind'ard of for a long time. Addicks and Indry'd be makin' great headway with 'em till Bushie 'd come along, and then 'twould be all off. The girls'd forget that the other two was in the room at all. And how do I account for that? Well, in the case of Addicks and his partner 'twas easy enough. They were hard as flint, always lookin' for the best of it.

Well, on the run out to the grounds this trip Bushie he cert'nly won everybody's heart. That's after he got two or three good meals into him. He'd coil up in his bunk of an evenin', about the time everybody'd be feelin' rested and contented, and in the right mood for it, and he'd get out his little harmonica. And man! maybe'd there'd be an easterly swishin' and a cross-sea poundin', and maybe on deck 'twould be half a foot of snow, and the watch slushin' around in it, wearin' their eyes out tryin' to see into what mortal eyes weren't meant to see into, and maybe we c'd hear 'em call out from one to the other. But Bushie he'd cuddle that little mouth-organ in the palm and fingers of his left hand, and the palm and fingers of his right hand he'd coil around on the outside of them again, like he was afraid somebody was goin' to steal it from him, and he'd curl his lips around the music side of it, and then, his shoulders hunched and his head to one side, he'd begin. And in five minutes you'd forget all about a no'th-easter, another five and you couldn't 'a' said whether you were to sea or in a duck-pond. Five more and you'd be back to home and wife, and if 'twarn't for oilskins and jackboots hangin' up by the stove to dry, you'd swear you could see the babies rollin' 'round the floor. Yes, sir; and when he wasn't so tired with his day at the trawls and dressin' down afterward—he warn't overstrong, the poor boy, and the work used to tire him out terribly some days—when there was any little let-up so there was a chance to rest up, man, you could see him fattenin' under your eyes, and then he'd joke and laugh till, if 'twas at table, you'd most forget to eat. He had a quick eye and brain, y' see, for odd happenings. Maybe that used up his strength same as so much hard work, that brain and eye of his that never rested, but we don't always make allowances for the extra things men do.

One day this trip leavin' the vessel it was pretty rough—Eddie there will remember that day. A rough day and rougher yet afore we got aboard again.

The first man to get aboard that day was Bushie. Before anybody else'd hauled his first tub this lad Bushie was aboard. 'Twas plain his trouble—the fright of the sea—was on him. I've seen it a score o' times and on many a man that made a good fisherman later. Spite of all they say about bein' born to a thing, there's a lot, too, in bein' trained to it. And besides the fright in Bushie's case, there was the exhaustion, too, this day. It tried the toughest of us that day. Well, Bushie cut his trawlin' gear and came aboard. I knew he cut it—I saw him when he did it. And he must've known I saw him, 'cause I was next dory to him, his lines and mine all but fouled. But he knew, I s'pose, that I'd never say anything, he and me bein' very friendly; and he was hopin', no doubt, that nobody else 'd find it out. He accounted for coming aboard so early by sayin' he got hung up and parted his gear, and it bein' a rough bottom, too, that would 'o' sounded plausible enough comin' from some men. But this Addicks repeats, "Parted his gear! And d'y' believe that shrimp had the strength to part a sixteen-pound ground-line?" and rushes up and overhauls the poor boy's tub of trawls, and there, sure enough, finds where it 'd been cut clean with a knife. And he brings what was left of the tub down into the forec's'le, where the first gang was to supper, and shows the mark of the knife.

One he showed it to was Eddie there. You remember? Of course. He showed it to me, though I made out I was too busy to look. Well, it was a hard thing to have to face across the lighted supper-table, the forec's'le filled with angry men; for, while the gang started out by not wantin' to be told about it, they warmed up, between Indry and Addicks's talk, by feelin' that they hadn't been treated right. Addicks heaves the tub of trawls through the bulkhead door and into the forehold; and Indry, who was like a thumb to Addicks's fingers, he turns to take it up. "And this man comes aboard here and expects to get a full share," says Indry, "a *man's* share, at the end of this trip—and for all the fish he'll bring aboard! And heaves away gear besides; and who'll pay for the lost gear? Will he? No; but it's the crew, not the man who cuts, who pays for lost gear. Yes, we'll do well by *him!*"

Well, if the Lord was to condemn me for my sins, the last punishment I'd want would be to set up before a gang of trawlers, maybe not so good-natured as usual because of a long, hard day in the dories; and perhaps half of 'em who hadn't wanted me aboard in the first place, and they passin' judgment on me after it 'd been proved I was a man that shirked my work, and that ran away from danger; that cut his gear, and put for the vessel when there was no need of it; and his shipmates, not himself alone, havin' to suffer for it.

I'm tellin' you it's within short o' hell. And I guess Bushie must've thought so that night. He sat there on the port lockers, the second man from the peak at the table—just sat there, denyin' nothing once they'd seen the cut line not even movin' for the cook to clear off the dishes; but just sat there, his head down; never looking up to meet a single eye, and not a blessed word out of him till just before he turned in.

By 'n' by he stood up by the samson-post; and standin' there, the light of the foc's'le lamp was strikin' his face sidewise, and the light of the lamp on him full—standin' there he faced them all and said, "Next time, I'll bet, there'll be none of you hang on any longer than I do." Just that—just like a boy that's ready to burst into tears—and turned his back and disappeared into the darkness of the peak; he had the top peak bunk. And this Addicks roared in pretended amazement after him, and so did Indry; but nobody else said anything. Them two, Indry and Addicks, were big, able men, with no lack of other shortcomings themselves; but good fishermen both, no denyin' it—good trawlers, the pair of them.

"He hang on!" sneers Addicks after Bushie'd gone; "he will if somebody is standin' by to see that he hangs on."

"I'll bet if we was to stand up by his bunk now we'd find him cryin'," adds this Indry.

I have small love myself for people that can't make allowance for people different from themselves, and that made me mad. "Maybe he is cryin'," I breaks in. "Good men, better men than either of you, have cried like girls in their time. Shut up!" I says.

"Aye, Martin, and more than that you said." Eddie Foy pounded the locker with his mug to be heard. "'Blast you,' says Martin to him, 'no more of it, or I'll heave the both of you where Addicks hove that tub of trawls to-night.'" Eddie Foy gazed about in pride of his big dory-mate. "And maybe he wouldn't 'a' hove them if they hadn't shut up!"

Next morning (continued Martin), when we turned out, it was too rough to put the dories over; but by the middle of the afternoon it moderated, so the skipper thought he'd try it. Some might 'a' said it was poor judgment orderin' the dories over that afternoon; but, Lord, if men want to bring home the fish they've got to take chances sometimes. So over we went; and Bushie bein' the first aboard the afternoon before, was, of course, the last out this day, and next to him was Addicks. The pair of 'em were almost together up to wind'ard when the vessel came about to run down the string again.

Well, after lettin' the trawls set for an hour or so the signal went from the vessel to haul. It was coming on gray and chill then, looking like snow, and pretty cold, with the wind in the east. And so it stayed till nigh dark, when the air cleared and the wind began to back around to the west'ard. It was slow work haulin', owing to the rough bottom. Long before I had my first tub in I misdoubted we'd make the vessel before dark. And we didn't. No dory got aboard till well after what should have been sunset; which there wasn't any that evenin'. I was the first on board that evenin', and after pitchin' my fish on deck I went into the rigging with a torch flaring over my head—the skipper keepin' the horn goin' meantime.

The next two or three men aboard had a report of two dories far down to le'ward drifting away before the tide; and the tide was then settin' before the westerly breeze at a great clip. But, as the skipper said, "Them two to le'ward can hear the horn, while them to wind'ard can't; and besides, it's eight dories against two!" And that was good judgment, too.

It might've been eight o'clock then, and lookin' bad for all of 'em; but like a hundred other times we see it lookin' bad it didn't turn out so bad. One after the other we picked up them eight wind'ard dories, but the last of 'em not till after eleven o'clock, gettin' them by the sound of their voices while they were still half a mile away because of the strong wind was blowin'. The missing two were Bushie and Addicks, and Addicks we got along about midnight.

"See anything of Bushie?" inquired the skipper, when he's alongside.

"Not since just after dark," answers Addicks. "When the wind hauled and we were left to le'ward I started for the vessel. He was then haulin' his trawls and slidin' off before wind and tide."

"Wonder you wouldn't give him a lift."

"Me? Give him—that boasted he'd hang out long's anybody? Besides, I had enough to do to take care of myself."

"I'll bet," says Eddie, there, to me, but loud enough so Addicks could hear him, "that Bushie and him had it out, and Bushie made him quit."

And I guess that was so; because Addicks, gen'rally ready enough to explain himself, had no answer to that.

We expected to see Bushie come aboard afore mornin', for it was a fine clear night overhead, though also, as you might expect of a westerly at that time of year, cold as hell. Well, a dory's but a small object on the wide ocean, and in the mornin' we got no sight of Bushie, nor during all that day—and a cold day it was—and the night that followed. On the second morning neither was he to be seen, and then we worried sure enough, for a winter nor'wester on the Atlantic it's the coldest wind there is on any ocean.

We didn't find Bushie; and a week later, having filled her up, we put for home. Maybe, we said, somebody's picked him up; but didn't believe it. And two days more saw us in Gloucester, with our flag to half-mast as we sailed past the Point.

You know how we have to shoot in around the end of the wharf and up into the slip, with that tall smoke-house hidin' whatever's layin' in to the firm's wharf till you're in yourself. There in the slip before us was the *Midnight*, Joe Murray's vessel, and her flag was to half-mast, and every sign was that she'd only just got in, too. "Well," says we; "we're not the only unfortunates," and the skipper hails Joe when we shot alongside. And he steps aboard the *Midnight*, as did half a dozen of us, soon as we made fast to him.

"Hard luck, Joe," says our skipper. "Anybody we know?"

"Nobody I know," says Joe; "but I know the dory. And maybe you'll know it, too, when you see it," and lifts the tarpaulin from off the bow of the top one of the nest of dories, and there we saw it, the name *Cygnet*.

"My dory," says our skipper. "I was hopin' he'd be picked up, but"—and looked to Joe's half-masted flag—"not like this. You got him, too?"

"Yes; we got him." For just a second when Joe said that I had a hope that Bushie was alive, but only for a second. Joe rolls the tarpaulin back further and there we all saw him, the poor frozen body, the oilskins covered with ice; but the face warn't ice-covered, nor marked in any way. Calm and smooth and natural as life, poor Bushie's frozen face was starin' up the sky.

The skipper looked down on him. We all looked down on him, and Joe Murray, touchin' the breast of the oil-jacket, said: "No wonder. Under these he hadn't clothes enough to warm a cat." And one of us there touched the poor forehead, and then another, and "Poor Bushie!" says two or three.

Joe replaces the tarpaulin over the body. "Hard lines," says Joe to our skipper. "And I s'pose 'twill be you will have to tell his folks?"

Our skipper comes to himself then. "No, not me, Joe; I'll be damned if I do," and wheeling and pointing his woolen mitt at Addicks and Indry. "One of you, damn you, go up and tell them."

As for myself, that liked the boy so well, I couldn't do anything. I s'pose I ought to've crushed the pair of 'em, but I couldn't have crushed a fly, I felt that bad; but Eddie, there, goes up to Addicks and repeats the skipper's words. "Yes, you," says Eddie, and leaps at him and smashes him to the deck. Yes, big Addicks, that was big enough to eat him, and when he stands up he smashes him again. And then he turns and smashes Indry. "You hounds o' hell!" shrieks Eddie, "go up and tell 'em." He said it, that same little Eddie, that—look at him there now—no bigger than a tub o' trawls.

And nobody seemed very much surprised at Eddie either; and without a word, without even stoppin' to wipe the blood from their faces—and their faces, not havin' been shaved for two weeks, the blood was crawling in and out of their beards—they swung themselves into the *Midnight's* riggin', and from there to the stringpiece, and hurries up the wharf on their errand. They didn't even stop long enough to get a drink in a saloon on the way up, but kept on toward Main Street, and never a look behind to see if we were watchin' them or no.

Yes, sir, they went on up. And never came back—not to the *Cygnet,* anyway. And next day we took their bags, slip-shods, bedding and diddy-boxes, and everything else in their bunks, and hove 'em into the harbor. One of 'em, Addicks, didn't need the gear, anyway; he never went fishing again. And Indry, before the month ended, was washed off the deck of the *Independence,* off Bacalien, she makin' a passage, and nobody jumped overboard after him.

Having ended his story, Martin had stood up, and was staring at the coffee kettle, as if contemplating another mug-up;

but moderation, as ever, prevailing with him, he eventually, though with a lingering shake of the head, replaced his mug in the grub-locker.

"February the twelfth, a year to-morrow—poor Bushie!" muttered Martin, and mounted the ladder.

"Poor Bushie!" echoed Foy, and climbed after Martin.

# XIV

## NORTH-EAST BAR

"No harm to them that's saved," said he—
"But here's to them that died."

Tom O'Donnell said that—that is, said it first. Many people have repeated it since, but with Tom O'Donnell it was born. He said a whole lot more—enough for somebody to make a song of—but the two lines quoted above serve to sum the matter up.

It was a winter's morning he said it. Cold? Oh, but it *was* cold. Wind from the north-west and blowing hard—a sort of dry blizzard. Every vessel coming in had stories to tell of what a time they had to get home and how long it took them.

"It's been tack, tack, tack from St. Peter's Bank, till we fair chafed the jaws off the boom of her," said Crump Taylor.

"Four days and four nights from Le Have," said Tommie Clancy. "Four days and four nights for the able *Arbiter* to come three hundred miles. Four days and four nights to butt her shoulders home—and glad to get home at that."

That was the story from all of them when they came in. And they were sights coming in, too. Ice? You had to look halfway to the mast-head to see anything *but* ice. Anchors, bows, dories in the waist, cable on deck—all was solid as could be—all on deck from rail to rail and clear aft to the wheel—ice, ice, ice.

The crew of the *Colleen Bawn* were putting her stores aboard. Her skipper, Tom O'Donnell, was standing on the dock and looking her over. He hummed a song as he looked. This was just after he had painted her black. She had come to him black, but in a run of bad luck he had painted her blue; and having worked off the bad luck, he had painted her black again. Now she looked beautiful—black and beautiful—and able! Let no man cast eye on the *Colleen* and not praise her ableness while Tom O'Donnell was by.

All at once he called out to one of his crew, "Martin, let's take a walk up the street." And Martin went gladly enough.

First they had a drink, and then O'Donnell stepped into the shop of what all fishermen rated the best tailor in Gloucester.

"Measure me for a suit of sails," was his word of greeting there. "Give me a Crump Taylor vest, a Wesley Marrs jacket and a Tommie Ohlsen pair of pants, and all of the best. And mind the mains'l."

"The overcoat, Captain?"

"The overcoat? What else? Isn't she the biggest sail of all? Mind when you come to that—put plenty of duck to it, the best and finest of duck. And good stout duck, double-ought, like what gen'rally goes into a fores'l. And the best and finest of selvin' and trimmin's along the leach and the luff of it. And let it hang low—the latest fashion, same's you made Crump Taylor. Crump steps ashore a while ago with one down to the rail. He tells me he has to sway it up every now and then to keep it off the deck. Five weeks to-day I'll want it. Mind now, the best."

"And which way do you go now, Captain?" said the tailor, when he had taken the big skipper's measure.

"To the east'ard."

"But not to-day?" said the tailor. "Too blowy, ain't it?"

"Maybe," said O'Donnell, "you'd like to go skipper o' the *Colleen Bawn?* S'pose now you go on with that suit, and let me go to the east'ard. And you tell me what it will be and I'll pay you now. How much? The best o' cloth I want, mind, and double-ought in the big coat—no less. It's to be a weddin', maybe."

"Best man?" said the tailor.

"I dunno whether 'twill be best man or second-best man, but that's the way of it now. Maybe I'll know more about it before we put out. But if I don't call for it next trip, you c'n wear it yourself. Here's your money. Come along, Martin."

Down the street he stopped at a jeweller's shop. "A diamond ring I want, and I don't know much about them."

He looped over an envelopeful that the salesman emptied on to the glass case. "I want no red or yellow or fancy colors—a good white one I want. Now here's one. A hundred dollars? Something better than that. This one, now? A hundred and fifty? And this one? A hundred and seventy-five, is it? And here's a two hundred one, you say? But here's a better one, isn't it? It's a bigger one, anyway. Only a hundred and eighty? Like men, aren't they—the biggest not always the best? Like men, yes—and maybe women, too—the showiest not always the best. I'll take this one, the two hundred and fifty dollar lad.

Martin, how do you like that? Would a young woman be pleased with that, d'y' think?"

"The woman, Skipper, that wouldn't be pleased with that ought to be hove over the rail."

"Well, I hope I won't have to heave anybody over the rail, or be hove over myself, boy. But pick out a little somethin' for yourself, Martin-boy. There's somethin' there'd go fine in your necktie when you're ashore. Hush, hush, boy—take it, and don't talk. And now"—to the man behind the case—"how much all told? This little pin for myself, too."

"Two hundred and fifty, and twenty for your friend's pin, and the little thing for yourself, five dollars—I'll throw that in, Captain—two hundred and seventy. And if you have a mind to change that diamond any time, we'll be willing to give you something else for it."

Tom looked down at the floor and then up at the salesman. "I don't think I'll want to change it. I mayn't have any use for it, but whether I do or not, you won't see it back here any more. Let's be movin', Martin."

He led the way out and away from Main Street and stopped on a corner. "Martin, do you wait under the lee of this house whilst I jog on a bit. 'Tisn't long I'll be gone. Swing off when you see me headin' back, and wait for me at the bottom of the hill."

Martin waited, but not for long. It seemed to him that he had taken no more than a dozen drags of his pipe when he saw his skipper coming back. Down the hill went Martin, and after him came his skipper.

Not a word said Tom O'Donnell until they were on Main Street again. Then it was only, "The stores'll be aboard by now, don't you think, Martin?"

"They ought to, Skipper."

"Then we'll put out." He threw a glance at the sky and then a look to the flag on the Custom House as they turned off Main Street to go down to the dock. At the head of the dock they met Wesley Marrs.

"Hulloh, Tom," hailed Wesley.

"Hulloh, Wesley. Go on to the vessel, you, Martin, and tell them to make sail. I'll follow on." Then, when Martin had gone on ahead, "When'd you get in, Wesley?"

"Just shot in."

"How's it outside?"

"Plenty of the one kind," said Wesley. "Anybody that likes it no'west ought to be pleased. Tack, tack, tack, for every blessed foot of the way. I all but put in to Shelburne once to give the crew a rest. Night and day, tack, tack, tack—I cal'late the rudder post's worn 'most out. Yes, sir. And never a let-up choppin' ice—had to, to keep her from sinkin' under us. Fourteen days from Fortune Bay that I've run in fifty-odd hours in the *Lucy* with the wind to another quarter. Man, but I was beginnin' to think the baby'd be grown a man afore I'd see him again. Well, I'm off."

"Where to, Wesley?"

"Where to? Home, of course."

"Oh, home?"

"Of course—the baby and the wife. Tom, but you ought to marry. You'll never be the man you was intended to be till you marry."

"Yes? And who'll I marry?"

"Oh, some nice, fine girl. Man, but there's whole schools of girls'd jump to marry you—whole schools, man. Heave your seine and you'd get a deck-load of 'em—or a dory-load, anyway."

"No, nor a dory-load, nor a single one caught by the gills in mistake. No, no, Wesley, it's not my kind they're lookin' for. I c'n haul the log, and, knowin' her course and allowin' for tides and one thing or another that's set down and the other things that aren't set down, but which a man knows nat'rally—— No, Wesley, girls aren't lookin' for the likes o' me. Tom O'Donnell will do to handle a vessel, maybe, and he'll take her where any other man that sails the sea'll take her, and he'll bring her home again. And he's good enough to get the fish and bring them to market, to hang out in a blow, to carry sail till all's blue, and the like o' that. But his style don't go these days, Wesley. No, there may be schools o' girls swimmin' around somewheres, but they're divin' the twine when Tom O'Donnell makes a set. Anyway, it wouldn't make any difference to me if whole rafts of 'em were to come swimmin' alongside and poke their heads up and say, 'Come and take me.' I'm one o' them queer kind, Wesley, that only goes after one girl. And I set for her—and didn't get her."

Wesley said nothing to that for a while. Then it was: "I didn't think when I spoke first, Tom. I'll say, though, that I don't think much of the girl that wouldn't stand watch with you if you asked her. If she wanted a man, Tom, I don't know where she'd get a better one—that's if it's a *man* she wanted. If she don't want a man, but only a smooth kind of arrangement that plays a banjo or c'n stand up to a pianner and sing, 'I loves yer, I loves yer,' or some other damn mess—and the same to every girl that looks his way—one of the kind that's hell ashore, but can't take in sail in a gale without washin' a couple of men over the lee-rail, one of the kind that gives this way and that to every tide that ebbs and flows, like a red-painted whistlin' buoy—why, then, maybe somebody else'd look prettier swashin' around for the people to look at and make use of. Maybe," went on Wesley, "she'd take a notion to someone like Artie McDee that just lost the *Neptune*. Heard of it?"

"'Twas in the papers this mornin', so they tell me. I'm not much of a hand to read papers."

"Well, he lost his vessel and ten of his men, and I'm hopin' he loses his papers. With half a man's courage and a quarter of the seamanship any master of a vessel oughter have, he'd've saved his vessel and all his men. He c'n thank the *Lucy Foster's* ableness and the courage of some of her crew that a soul of them got home at all. They came home with us—all but McDee—from Fortune Bay. He was goin' to get a passage over to St. Pierre and wait a while there."

"McDee!" said Tom, "that'll be a bad bit o' news to Delia."

"What!"

"Yes, he is the man. I think 'tis him, anyways. I know he used to hang around there when I was to sea—and a word dropped this mornin'—— It must be somebody; and who but him?"

Wesley looked at O'Donnell. "Well, if it is him, may the Lord forgive me for pickin' him off. Oh, well, it's all in the year's fishin'. He's lucky. Maybe he'll live to teach her what a man oughtn't be, though I don't suppose you'll care so much about it by the time she's learned the lesson. Man, but I can't believe Delia Corrigan'd throw you for Artie. No, Tom, I can't. But here's the Anchorage fair on our beam. What d'y' say to a little touch, hah?"

"I don't mind, Wesley."

"What'll it be to, Tom?" Wesley raised his glass and waited. They were leaning against the rail by that time.

"What to? Oh, to the *Neptune's* gang—the whole ten of 'em."

"Sure enough—the whole ten. Here's a shoot—but hold up. Which ten, Tom—the ten lost or the ten saved?"

"The ten saved? No, no. No harm to them, Wesley, but—the Lord's looked out for them." Tom raised his glass: "Here's to them that was lost."

"Them that was lost? I dunno but you're right, Tom. The saved ones got their share, come to think. Here's to them that was lost." And Wesley gulped his liquor down.

"And which way, Tom?" Wesley inquired after the return drink.

"To the east'ard," said Tom.

"To the east'ard? Well, I don't need to say fair wind to you, for you've got it. This wind holds, and you'll be heavin' trawls in that fav'rite spot of yours on Sable Island no'th-east bar in forty hours or so. I cal'late you'll keep on fishing there till some fine day you get caught. Well, good luck and drive her, Tom, till you're back again." And Wesley swung off for his wife and baby.

"Drive her," Wesley had said, and certainly Tom O'Donnell drove her that trip to the east'ard. Before a whistling gale and under four whole lower sails the *Colleen* went away from Eastern Point and across the Bay of Fundy like a ghost in torment. Two or three new men, not yet in full sympathy with their Skipper, began to inquire what it all meant. They could see the sense of driving a vessel like that on a passage home, but going out!

On that passage to the east'ard only the watch stayed on deck where a man had his choice—the watch and the Skipper—the Skipper walking the quarter and dodging the seas that came after her between little lines of some song he was humming to himself. Every man on coming below after a watch spoke of the Skipper and his singing, but only a word did they catch now and then to remember afterward.

"Out in the snow and the gale they rowed,
And no man saw them more,"

was what one caught.

"A fine thing to be singing on a cold winter's night with a howling gale behind and the seas breaking over her quarter. Yes, a fine thing, that," said the crew, in the security of the cabin below.

"And no man saw them more——"

Some men lost in dories the skipper must have been talking about, and after that:

"And should it be the Lord's decree
Some day to lay me in the sea,
There'll be no woman to mourn for me—
For that, O Lord, here's thanks to Thee!"

under his breath generally, but his voice rising now and then with the wind.

Martin Rush, who happened to be at the wheel just then, made out that snatch of his skipper's song as he walked the tumbling quarter. And he kept walking the quarter, walking the quarter—and a cold night it was for a man to be walking the quarter—a word to the watch once in a while, but saying nothing mostly, except to croon the savage songs to himself.

Surely nothing peaceful was coming out of that kind of a song, thought watch after watch, bracing themselves at the wheel to meet each new blast of the north-west wind.

In the morning he was still there walking the quarter—less mournful, perhaps, but in a savage humor. Men who had sailed with him for years did not know what to make of it. There was the incident of the big bark, a good part of whose sail had evidently been blown away and the most of what was left tied up. Under the smallest possible canvas she was heading close up to the wind and making small way of it.

"Why the divil don't they heave her to entirely!" snapped O'Donnell. "Look at her, will ye, the size of her and the sail she's carryin', and then the size of this little one and the sail *she's* carryin'."

The men chopping ice on the bark's deck stood transfixed as they saw the little *Colleen* sweep by. Under her four lowers, and going like the blizzard itself was she, with a big, bearded man, wrapped to his eyes in a great-coat, waving his arms and swearing across the white-topped seas at them.

"And did you never see a vessel afore?" barked O'Donnell. "Well, look your fill, then, and get our name while you're about it, and report us, will you?—the *Colleen Bawn* o' Gloucester, and she doin' her fifteen knots good, will you?"

And then, turning away to his own: "The likes o' some of 'em oughtn't to be allowed a cable-length off shore. Their mothers ought to be spoke to about it. There he is that should be going along about his business—and look at him, hove to! Waitin' for it to moderate! As fine a day as this and waitin' for it to moderate! The sun shinin', and as nice a green sea as ever a man'd want to look at! It's the like o' them that loses vessels and men—makes widows and orphans."

So much for his crew. Then a dark look ahead and beyond the green and white seas that were sweeping by the *Colleen's* bow, while the bearded lips moved wrathfully. "Ten men lost, blast him! And drinkin' wine, maybe, in Saint Peer now, if we c'd only see him! Yes, and he'll come back to Gloucester with a divil of a fine story to tell. 'Tis a hero he'll make himself out to be. Looked in the face o' death and escaped, he'll say—blast him!"

Sable Island—sometimes, and not too extravagantly, termed the Graveyard of the Atlantic—is set among shoal waters that afford the best of feeding-ground for the particular kinds of fish that Gloucestermen most desire—halibut, cod, haddock, and what not—and so to its shoal waters do the fishermen come to trawl or hand-line.

Stretching its sandy length east and west, a flat quarter moon in shape, is Sable Island. Two long bars, extending northwesterly and north-easterly, make of it a full deep crescent. Nowhere is the fishing so good (or so dangerous) as close in on these bars, and the closer in and the shoaler the water, the better the fishing. There are men in Gloucester who have been in close enough to see the surf break on the bare north-east bar, the more dangerous of the pair; but that would be in soft weather and the bar to windward, and they invariably got out in a hurry.

Two hundred and odd wrecks of one kind or another, steam and sail, have settled in the sands of Sable Island, so the records have it; but of how many good vessels have been driven ashore on the long bars on dark and stormy nights or in the whirls of snowstorms and swallowed up in the fine sand before ever mortal eye could make note of their disappearing hulls, of them there is no record.

Gloucester fishermen need no tabulated statement to remind them that the bones of hundreds of their kind are bleaching on the sands of Sable Island, and yet of all the men who sail the sea they are the only class that do not give it wide berth in winter. And of all the skippers who resorted to the north-east bar in winter, Tom O'Donnell was preeminent. A reckless man, said many, but those that knew him best answered that it would be recklessness indeed if he did not know the place; if he did not know every knoll and gully of it that man could know, including gullies and knolls that were not down on charts—and never would be, because the men that made the charts would never go in where Tom O'Donnell had gone and sounded when the weather allowed.

It was on the Sable Island grounds—the north-east bar—that the *Colleen Bawn,* after a slashing passage, let go her anchor on the morning of the second day. Twenty fathoms of water it was, shoal enough water any time, but good and shoal for that time of the year, when gales that made lee shore of the bar were frequent. Tom O'Donnell's crew were not worrying, though; they had faith in their skipper.

Lying there close in, with the wind north-west, the *Colleen Bawn* was in the lee of the north-east bar, and that first day, too, was not at all rough. And the fish were thick there, and as fine and fat as man would want to see. Fifteen thousand of halibut and ten thousand of good cod—certainly that was a great day's work. It certainly was worth fishing close in to get a haul like that. Turning in that night they were all thinking what a fine day they had made of it, and wondering if the fellow they had seen to the eastward—in deeper and safer water—had done so well. But they all felt sure he had not. "In the morning," said Martin Rush, "he'll come in and give us a look-over, and finding we did so well, maybe he'll anchor close in and make a set, too."

Nobody saw him in the morning, however, for it came on thick of snow and the wind to the eastward. Wind in that quarter would be bad, of course, if it breezed up; but it had not yet breezed up, and the *Colleen's* crew were not minding any mere possibility. It was not too bad to put the dories over, and between squalls they hauled their trawls again, heaving up the anchor, however, before leaving the vessel, so that their Skipper could stand down and pick them up flying.

"We'll clear out, I'm thinkin', for to-night," said O'Donnell when the dories were back aboard. And clear out they did, which was well, too, for that night the wind increased to a bad gale, and, safe and snug below, alongside the hot stove or under the bright lamp, it did them all good to think that the north-east bar was not close under their lee. They had still to keep an eye out, of course, and stand ready to stand off in a hurry, for should it come too bad it would mean lively work to get out.

Safe away to the eastward of them, watch after watch of the *Colleen* stamping about deck could make out the riding light of the other vessel to anchor.

"In the mornin', whoever he is, he'll be gettin' his courage up, and maybe he'll drop down," said O'Donnell's crew.

They were in great good-humor. And well they might be, with twenty-five thousand of halibut and fifteen thousand of fine cod after two days' fishing. Yes, well they might be—halibut sixteen and eighteen cents a pound when they left Gloucester.

It was worth taking chances to get fish like that; and with a skipper who knew the bar as most men know their own kitchens, who could foretell the weather better than the glass hanging up on the cabin bulkhead, who could keep run of a vessel and tell you where you were any time of the day or night out of his head—no need for him to be everlastingly digging out charts and taking sights—they were safe. Yes, sir, they were safe with this man. Fishing in twenty fathoms of water in that kind of weather looked bad—very bad—and they would not care to try it with everybody in heavy weather, but with a short scope and with Tom O'Donnell on the quarter—why, that was a different matter altogether.

In the morning it was so thick that they could not see a length ahead; so the skipper, to be safe, kept the lead going. That afternoon it cleared, and they saw to anchor, but now inside of them, their neighbor of the day before.

Tom O'Donnell looked her over. "What do you call her?" he asked finally of Martin Rush.

"The *Eldorado* or the *Alhambra*—I wouldn't want to say which, they bein' alike as two herrin'."

"That's right—they do look alike, Martin. But she's the *Eldorado*—Fred Watson. But what's got into him this trip? Generally he fishes farther off. But 'tis Watson's vessel, anyway, and he's got his dories out. He must be drunk—if he isn't foolish. But he don't drink—not aboard his vessel. And he never before was a foolish man. What ails him at all? She'll be draggin' soon, if she isn't already. He don't seem to know too much about that swell in there with an easterly wind—I doubt he ever fished in so close before—with the shoal to loo'ard of him—and if he don't let go his other anchor he'll soon be where a hundred anchors won't do him any good. And will you look at where some of his dories are now!"

Growing nervous under the strain, he stood down and hailed the two men in the dory farthest from the *Eldorado*. They said they did not know quite what to do—no signal to haul had yet been hoisted on the vessel. They guessed, though, they would hang on a while longer.

He understood. No fisherman wants to be the first to cut and go for the vessel, and so lose fish and gear also. Not only that, but to have somebody look across the table at supper and say, "And so there were some that cut their gear and ran for it to-day, I hear?" No, men face a good bit of danger before that.

In the next of the *Eldorado's* dories they were pretty nervous, but said that as long as the others were not cutting they were not going to.

"That's right," said Tom, "that's the way to feel about it. But take my advice and you'll buoy your trawls and come aboard of me. It's goin' to be the divil to pay on this bar to-night—and in these short days 'twill soon be night."

And they, knowing O'Donnell's reputation, buoyed their trawls and came aboard the *Colleen* with their dory. It was then beginning to snow. Three more dories out of the snow were taken aboard the *Colleen*. By the time those four dories of the *Eldorado* were safe, it was too rough to attempt to put the men aboard their own vessel. "But I'll stand down and hail her for ye," said O'Donnell.

Now all this time it never occurred to Tom O'Donnell that anybody but Fred Watson was master of the *Eldorado*. In the hurry and bustle of picking up the stray dories, there had been no time to talk of anything but the work in hand; and so his immense surprise when he made out Artie McDee standing by the quarter rail of the *Eldorado*, and so his anger when McDee called out before he himself had a chance to hail: "If you're getting so all-fired jealous of me, Tom O'Donnell, that you can't even see me get a good haul of fish without you trying to steal it from me——"

The rest of it was lost in the wind, but there was enough in that much to make O'Donnell almost leap into the air. "So it's you, is it? Lord, and I'd known that, you c'n be sure I'd never tried to help you out." He wanted to say a whole lot more, and say it good and hard, evidently, but he did not. All he did say to McDee before bearing away was, "You take my advice, Arthur McDee, and you'll let go your second anchor." Just that, and sheered off and left him.

"And how comes it McDee's got the *Eldorado?*" he then asked of one of the men he had picked up.

"He came aboard at Saint Peer, where we put in with Captain Watson sick of the fever. He came aboard there and took charge."

"H'm!" O'Donnell stroked his beard and smiled—smiled grimly. "I don't see but what he brought it on himself"—that last as though he were talking to himself.

He looked over toward the *Eldorado* again. "I can't see that we can help him, anyway," he said again, and the grim smile deepened. "We might just as well go below—there's the cook's call. Let all hands have supper, and we'll sway up, sheet in and stand out. Whatever McDee does, it's not me will be hanging around here this night."

With the words of their skipper to point the way, most of the *Colleen's* crew agreed that, after all, it was not their funeral. Lord knows, a crew had enough to do to look out for their own vessel in that spot in bad weather. And as for Artie McDee—Lord, they all knew *him* and what *he'd* do if 'twas the other way about—if 'twas the *Colleen* was in trouble.

But it was not McDee alone. There were nine others. That phase of it the crew argued out below, and that was what they agreed their skipper must be wrestling with up on deck.

The Lights gleamed out of forec's'le and cabin as hatches were slid and closed again, with watch after watch coming and going, but Tom O'Donnell stayed there on deck. It was a bad deck to walk, too, the vessel pitching heavily and the big seas every once in a while breaking over her. Their skipper seemed to pay no attention, only stamped, stamped, stamped the quarter.

The men passed the word in the morning. "Walkin', walkin', walkin', always walkin', speakin' aloud to himself once in a while. Man, but if he's savin' it up for anybody, I wouldn't want to be that partic'lar party when he's made up his mind to unload."

And what was it his soul was wrestling with? What would any man's soul be wrestling with if he saw whereby a rival might be disposed of for good and for all? Especially the sort of creature that rival was! He had only to let him alone now—say no word, and there it was—destruction for him as certain as the wind and sea that were making, as certain as the sun that was rising somewhere to the east'ard.

All that, and the primal passions of Tom O'Donnell for the untamed soul of Tom O'Donnell to contend with. He looked like another man in the morning. He groaned—groaned, yes, and pressed his hands to his eyes as one who would shut out the sight of horrible images. Only to think of Tom O'Donnell groaning! And questioning his soul—talking to something inside of him as if it were another man. "But it won't leave me a better man before God—and God knows, too, it won't make Delia happier. God knows it won't—it won't——"

It was light enough then for O'Donnell to see that the *Eldorado* was drifting, drifting, not rapidly as yet, but certainly and to sure destruction, with the ten souls aboard of her doomed as so many thousands of others had been doomed before them. And the wind was ever making, and the sea ever rising. She had both anchors out then, as O'Donnell saw; and he saw also when her chain parted. "Now she's draggin'," he muttered then, and waited to see what action McDee would take. "Why in God's name don't he do something?" and ordered the man at the wheel on the *Colleen* to stand down.

Rounding to and laying the *Colleen* as near to the *Eldorado* as he dared in that sea, he roared out: "What in God's name are you doing there, Artie McDee? Don't you see your one anchor can't hold her? Cut the spars out of her—both spars, man!"

McDee was frightened enough then, and in short order had the spars over the side. That helped her, but it could not save her. She was still dragging—slowly, slowly, but surely, and promising to drag more rapidly as the water grew shoaler. And it was getting shoaler all the time.

O'Donnell threw up his hands. "They're goin'! To-night will see her and them buried in the sand." He turned to his crew, standing in subdued groups about the *Colleen's* deck. "I want a man to go with me in the dory. Maybe we can get them off."

There were plenty ready to go; but he wanted only one. "No," he said to one, "you've got a wife," and to another, "You'll be missed, too. I want somebody nobody gives a damn about—like myself!" and took a young fellow—there is always one such in every crew of fishermen—that swore he had not mother, father, brother, sister, nor a blessed soul on earth that cared whether he ever came home or was lost. And doubtless he was telling the truth, for he certainly acted up to it. He laughed—no affected cackle, but a good round laugh—when he leaped over the side and into the dory with his Skipper.

"If I don't come back," he called to his dory-mate, "you c'n have that diddy-box you've been so crazy to get—the diddy-box and all's in it. For the rest, you c'n all have a raffle and give the money to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, back in Gloucester."

"Malachi-boy, but you're a man after my own heart," said O'Donnell, as the dory lifted on to the seas and away from the shelter of the *Colleen's* side. And Malachi flushed with delight. There was what he lived for—where Tom O'Donnell praised one must have been a man.

A dory is the safest small boat that the craft of man has yet devised for living in troubled waters. Handled properly, it will live where ships will founder. And yet, though O'Donnell and Malachi Jennings were the two men to the oars, it was too much even for the dory in that sea; and over she went before they were half-way to the *Eldorado*. The crew of the *Colleen*, seeing them bob up, and for the time safely clinging to the plug-strap, whisked another dory to the rail and two men stood by to man her, but their Skipper waved them back.

"Pay out an empty dory!" came his voice above the wind's opposition. Which they did, and speedily, and the capsized pair managed to get into it from the bottom of their own dory as it drifted near, and, with great care, the two men lying in the bottom of it were hauled alongside the *Colleen* and helped aboard.

"No man can row a dory in that sea this day," was O'Donnell's first word. "And a man with big boots and oilskins overboard it—too small a chance. But put a longer line on that same dory and pay it out again." Which they did also, and in that way began to take the gang off the *Eldorado*.

Five trips of the dory were made, two of the *Eldorado's* crew coming back each trip, one crouched in the stern and the other lying flat on the bottom amidships. It was the roughest kind of a passage, and even when the dory would come alongside the *Colleen* the most careful handling was needed to get them safely aboard.

Safe on the deck of the *Colleen*, McDee offered his hand to O'Donnell, who did not seem to notice, but said, "If you go below, Captain McDee, you'll find a change of dry clothes in my room, and you c'n turn in there and rest yourself."

"But I want to thank you," said McDee.

"Take your thanks to the divil. 'Twas for no love of you I stood by. You c'n have the best on this vessel, but take your hand? Blast you, no! Go below, or I'll throw you below." And McDee went below without delay.

It was late in the afternoon then. Even while they were hoisting that last dory over the rail O'Donnell had given his orders to head her off the shoal. At first all thought she would come clear, but in a little while they began to doubt, and doubt turned to misgiving, and misgiving to certainty. Sea and wind were too much for them now. In saving the *Eldorado's* crew they had waited too long—the tide was now against them also—and now it was no use. It was O'Donnell himself who said so at last, and went aloft before it was too dark to take a look at the surf they were being forced into.

He stayed aloft for about ten minutes, and when he came down all hands knew it was to be desperate work that night.

"Put her about," was his first order, and "Take a sounding, Martin," his second.

She came about in the settling blackness and started for shoal water.

"You might's well put her side-lights up," he said next. "Nobody'll get in our road to-night—nor we in anybody else's—but we'll go shipshape. And what do you get?" he asked of Martin, when the lead came up.

"Fifteen fathom," was the word from Martin. Fifteen fathom, and this a winter gale and a winter sea, and the strongest of tides against them!

"Fifteen fathom and goin' into it straight's ever a vessel can go," said O'Donnell. "Wicked 'tis, but the one thing'll make me laugh when we go——"

"Fourteen fathom!" from Martin.

"Fourteen? She's sure shoaling——"

O'Donnell was at the wheel himself then, and the *Colleen* was beginning to feel the pounding. They could not see the sky at all, it was that black, but all around they could see the combers breaking white—so white that they made a kind of light of their own. And then it was, with the Lord knows how much wind behind them and seas mast-head high and the vessel taking it fair abeam, that the crew of the *Colleen* and the crew of the *Eldorado* guessed what was running in Tom O'Donnell's mind. He was to drive her across the bar! With all the sail in the *Colleen* on her, to let her take the full force of it and bang her across the shoals, where soon there would not be enough water to let her set up on an even keel!

Martin Rush was heaving the lead all the time, and all noted how he made himself heard when it came to ten fathom.

"Ten fathom!" the crew repeated, and murmured it over till one got courage to ask, "Is it going to drown us you are, Captain O'Donnell?"

"I'm trying to save you, boys," he answered, his voice as tender as could be and yet be heard above a roaring gale.

"Nine and a half," and then, "Nine fathom!" came from Martin Rush, barely able to hold his place by the rail, the vessel was pitching so.

It was at eight fathoms that Artie McDee raised a cry of protest, and, hearing that, O'Donnell ordered Martin to sound no more. "Bring the lead here, Martin," he said, and taking a big bait knife he always kept on the house, with one stroke cut the lead-line off short. Then he opened the slide of the cabin companionway and hove the lead on to the cabin floor with a "There, now, maybe we *are* goin' to be lost. I think myself that maybe we will, but some of ye mayn't die of fright beforehand anyway."

She was fair into it then, making wild work of it, with O'Donnell still to the wheel, and all his great strength needed to hold her. He called one of his men to help him once, and he, feeling the full force of it, now and again would start to ease her up a little, but the moment a spoke went down so much as a hair's breadth Tom O'Donnell's big arms would work the other way. "Maybe you think this is a place to tack ship," O'Donnell said once, and the wheel stayed up and she took it full force.

How he ever expected to save the *Colleen* nobody ever knew, beyond trying to lift her across with the sheer weight of the wind to her sails. And that would be sheer luck, such luck as had never befallen a vessel in their plight before. Other men of courage with stout vessels must have tried that, they knew, and none of them had ever got over, nor come back to tell how close they came to it.

And that was all there was to it—sheer luck. O'Donnell would have told them, had they asked him. And yet it was not luck altogether. True, he knew no channel across—there was no channel across—and yet he knew there were little gullies scooped out here and there on the sand-ridges. And if a man could make one now and one again, jumping over the almost dry beach, as it were, between them—who knows?—it might be done. On a black night like this nobody could see the gullies, or on any kind of a night, for that matter; but then there was that something—he did not know what to call it—inside of him that told him the things he could not hear nor see nor feel. And then again, let a vessel alone, and she will naturally shy for the deep water. Force her with the rudder, and she will go where the rudder sends her. O'Donnell forced her, but only to make her take the full weight of the wind. It was necessary to drive her over if ever she was to get over at all. That same something inside told him when her nose was nearing the high shoals—it came to him as if her quivering planks carried the message; there it was, put her off now, and now again, now hold here that the wind may have its lifting effect, now let her go and she'll find the way. That was the way of it—bang, bang, bang, on her side mostly, with her keel striking bottom as she drove over the sand-ridges—her stem rushing through at an awful clip when she found a gully a little deeper than usual.

The great seas broached over her, and it became dangerous to remain on deck. So O'Donnell ordered all hands below and the slides drawn tight after them, fore and aft.

"I don't see the difference whether we're washed off up here or drowned below," said one. "Go below, just the same," said O'Donnell, and below they all went, while O'Donnell, lashed to the wheel, prepared for what further fury wind and sea had in store for himself and his vessel.

It was a sea to batter a lighthouse down. It takes shoal water for wicked seas, and this certainly was shoal water, with the sand off bottom swirling around deck. A noble vessel was the *Colleen,* but when the sea took charge that night everything was swept clean from her decks. Dories first—her own eight and the four of the *Eldorado's* that had been picked up, twelve in all—went with one smash. O'Donnell allowed himself a little pang as he watched them and heard the crash. It was too dark to see them clearly; but he knew how they looked, floating off in the white combers in kindling-wood. The booby-hatches went next, and after them the gurry-kids—matchwood all. Everything that was not bolted went. The very rails went at last, crackling from the stanchions as if they were cigar-box sides when they did go.

"'Twill be the house next," he muttered. "And then her planks will come wide apart—and then——" He rolled it between his teeth. "Well, then we'll all go together. But"—he locked his jaws again—"drive her you must, Tom O'Donnell," and bang, bang, smash, bang, and smash again he held her to it.

And in the morning she came clear; still an awful sea on and wind to tear the heart out of the ocean itself, but clear water—beautiful, clear water. By the morning light he saw what he could not see in the dark night, that her port anchor was gone from her bow—scraped off against the bottom—and that her decks were covered with the sand off the bottom also; but she herself—his darling *Colleen*—was all right. There was nothing gone that could not be replaced—maybe a bit loose in the seams, but, Lord, Gloucester was full of good calkers—and now they had the beautiful clear water. God be praised! And, after all, if never a woman in all the world smiled on him again, 'twas worth while saving men's lives.

O'Donnell drew the slide back from the cabin companionway. "Set the watch," he called, and the first on watch, Martin Rush, came up and took the wheel from him.

"Gloucester," said O'Donnell—"you know the course, Martin. And be easy on her. 'Tisn't in nature for a vessel not to loosen a bit after last night, but there will be nothing the pumps won't clear. I know that by the heave of her under me. She's all right, Martin—a great vessel. We owe our lives to her ableness this night, but pump her out," and went below to draw off his boots. His legs were so swollen that he had to split the leather from knee to heel to get them off, and when he turned them upside down sand ran out of the legs of them. "A wild night," he said, and looked curiously at the sand—a wild night it was—"and I'm tired. Since leavin' Gloucester I've not seen my bunk. Call me in two hours," and turned in on the floor and fell instantly asleep.

After a storm it should be good to see the fine green water rippling again under the sun, but to Tom O'Donnell it brought no sense of joy. He only glowered and glowered as down the coast he sailed the *Colleen*. Even the sight of Cape Sable, which generally brings a smile to the faces of fishermen homeward bound, had no effect on him. He drove her on, and even seemed to welcome the cold nor'-wester that met him when he straightened out for what in a fair wind, and his vessel tight, would have been one long last riotous leg.

He smashed into that nor'-wester, and it smashed into him. Tack, tack, tack—the *Colleen* did not have her own way all the time. Three days and three nights it was, with the able *Colleen* gradually encasing herself in ice. Only the ice seemed to please Tom O'Donnell. The day he left Gloucester it had been just like that on incoming vessels. And that was a bitter day, and it was a bitter day again when he was coming back—and not with cold alone. Ice, ice, ice—"Let her ice up," and from Cape Sable to the slip in Gloucester Harbor he kept her going.

The *Colleen* was no sooner tied to the dock than away went the crew of the *Eldorado*. Away also went the *Colleen's* crew as soon as they had tidied things up and the Skipper had given the word.

Tom O'Donnell did not hurry. There was nothing for him to hurry for. So he cleaned up, changed his clothes, locked the cabin of the *Colleen*, and went slowly up the dock.

He was hailed on the way by any number of people—fishermen, dealers, lumpers, idlers. Those who knew him tendered congratulations or shook hands, slapped him on the shoulder—the story of Sable Island bar had preceded him. Some there were who stood in awe, only looked at him, examined face and figure for further indications of the daring of the man. The whole water-front was talking over it. Rapidly the whole town was learning it.

Tom nodded, shook hands, said, "How is it here?" and "Thank ye kindly," and went on his way to the owner's store. He reckoned up his trip, ordered a few things immediately needed on the vessel, and said, "That's all I'm thinkin' for now," and went up the street. On the way he passed Delia Corrigan's house. He did not mean to, but he could not help it—he looked up for sign of her as he got abreast of the windows. There she was, cold as it was, window raised and calling to him. He waited to make sure, and she again said, "Won't you come in?"

Tom went up the steps and into the snug living-room, where Delia was waiting—a rosy, wholesome-looking young woman, now bravely trying to smile.

"Home again, Tom?"

"Home again, Delia—yes."

"And a fine thing you did."

"No fine thing that I can see to it. Men in a vessel were driftin' on to the bar and I took them off and gave them a passage home."

"Tom——"

"Yes?"

"You left me in a hurry that morning, Tom. You shouldn't have rushed out so. After you were gone Captain Marrs stepped in to tell me about his rescue of Captain McDee and part of his crew. And then he began to tell me other things—about you. He's a good friend of yours, Tom. After a time I began to see what it was he meant, and without letting him finish I ran out to see you. But you were gone. I could just see your vessel going out by the Point in all that gale. You put to sea in all that gale, Tom?"

"Put to sea? Yes, and lucky I did, maybe, for I was no more than in time to bring back the man you want—and he'd never seen Gloucester again if I hadn't."

"And who was that?"

"Who was that? Who but McDee?"

"Captain McDee? No, no! The man I want to hear about came back in your vessel, but it wasn't Captain McDee."

Tom O'Donnell, trembling, stared at her.

"Not Artie McDee, Delia?"

"Tom, dear, will I have to say it again? And why did you mistake me that morning? Could I be a woman and not have a word of pity for a man that came so near to being lost as Captain McDee? No, it wasn't Captain McDee who came back in your vessel that—Tom, dear, but must I say it again?"

"Oh," gasped Tom. "Delia, mavourneen! Mavourneen, mavourneen! And 'twas me all the time, dear? And the black, black night I put in on Sable Island bar! Oh, Delia, Delia, but there was hate and murder in my heart that night!"

"Never mind that now, Tom. It wasn't hate and murder at the last. And—but——"

"But what, Alanna?"

"My breath, dear. Tom, Tom, but the stre'gth o' you!"

# XV

## STRATEGY AND SEAMANSHIP

### I

Harry Glover was generally admitted to be a great diplomat; at least, most people in Gloucester said he must be—diplomat, strategist, or whatever it was—else how could he, a man who had never made any record in a fishing way, induce so shrewd a man as Fred Withrow, something of a schemer, too, to build him a fine vessel like the *Calumet* and send him to the Newfoundland coast for frozen herring on a trip wherein an owner stood to lose more money possibly, should things go wrong, than in any other fishing venture.

The *Calumet* was lying into Little Haven, Placentia Bay, when Glover, sitting in his cabin, heard a hail and an inquiry for Captain Marrs of the *Lucy Foster*.

Glover, ever wide-awake, was on deck in an instant. It was a man in a boat and looking tired. "Captain Marrs, did you say?" asked Glover.

"Yes, sir—Captain Wesley Marrs."

"Why, his vessel was here, but he's gone."

"Been gone long?"

"Oh, two days now."

The messenger looked discouraged. "Did he say where he was going to, sir?"

"Why, yes—but you look froze up. Come aboard. You don't never take a little touch of anything—something nice and warm from Saint Peter—something that'll melt the frost inside your chest before you know you got it down—or do you? On a cold day like this," insinuated Captain Glover, "with frost in the air and maybe a long row ahead of you."

"It is more than a common cold day," assented the messenger.

"Cold day! I should say! Why, I don't know how you ever stood it comin' as far away as you did—ten miles, did you say you came?"

"Ten mile? Ten mile?" snorted the messenger.

"Ten miles. Why, yes. Ain't that what it is to Saint Mary's?"

"Saint Mary's? I didn't come from no Saint Mary's. I come from Folly Cove—eighteen mile."

"Lord, but you don't tell me! What d'y' say, now—another little taste? Let me see. Who's that fellow down there who's such a great hand to get herring? Let me see now—Johnson? Burke? No, not Burke. Robbins? No, not Robbins, nor Lacey. That's queer—I know him so well and yet can't remember his name."

"Do you mean Rose, John Rose?" suggested the messenger.

"Rose, is it? Is it Rose you've come from?"

"Yes, sir—John Rose."

"That's it, come to think of it, old John Rose."

"Why, he ain't so old."

"No? Well, it's so long since I've seen him. Have another little taste, and don't be afraid of it. There's another jug when that one's empty. Seen John lately?"

"Seen him? I should say. Last man I spoke to afore I left."

"That so? Any herring down there?"

"A few. But I must be gettin' along. John Rose'd talk to me if he knew I've been loafin' here. Which way, Captain, did you say I'd find Captain Marrs?"

Glover carefully headed the messenger about as far off Wesley Marrs's course as the length and breadth of Placentia Bay would admit. He waited just long enough for the messenger to double the nearest headland, then up anchor, made sail, and away for Folly Cove. It was ten in the morning when he weighed anchor, and early afternoon found him knocking at the door of John Rose's little house.

He at once introduced himself. "Captain Glover of the *Calumet*. But maybe you've been expecting me."

"Not that I knows of," said Rose.

"What, ain't Captain Marrs sent word yet?"

"Word from Captain Marrs? Why, it was him I was expecting."

"I know—I know, but he's sailed for home. By this time I cal'late he's to the west'ard of Miquelon, streaking it across the Gulf, laying to it for home. Filled up, did Wesley, night afore last, at Little Haven."

"Filled up at Little Haven? Why, when did any herrin' hit in there?"

"Two days ago. And Wesley got 'em. And the last thing he said afore wearing off was, 'Harry, you know I got some good friends across the bay, and maybe one or two of 'em'll be having some herrin' saved up for me after this cold snap. If you hear of any and can help any of 'em out by taking 'em off their hands at a fair price, why, I'll consider it a great favor—a great favor to me, Harry. There's John Rose down to Folly Cove, a great friend of mine. I'll send him word 'bout you, Harry, so in case he gets hold of any he'll maybe let you have 'em.' Wesley and me's great friends, you see, Mr. Rose, and Wesley, no doubt, thinkin' there mightn't be any market, wanted to do you a good turn, too."

"Oh, there's plenty market. Herrin's been that scarce this winter that people been from everywhere lookin' for a load—yes. But I was savin' them for Wesley. But if Wesley's gone, and you're such a great friend of Wesley's—any friend of Wesley's a friend of mine—and sailin' from the same firm in Gloucester, you say?"

"The same firm, the Duncans."

"That so? Well, I can't say as ever I heard Wesley speak of you or any mention of your name down this way before—but that ain't extraor'nary, maybe. Anyway, being as you're a friend of Wesley's, you can have them herrin' just the same as if you was Wesley himself."

The loading of the *Calumet* was a record performance. By dark she was off and away.

And as she cleared the last headland of Placentia Bay, as she squeezed by Shag Rocks and left Lamalin astern, Captain Harry Glover had to laugh aloud. "O Lord, but I call that getting ahead of a man!" he chuckled. "It was too easy. Talk about strategy!"

## II

The *Lucy Foster* was lying into Big Whale Gut with Wesley Marrs chafing to complete his cargo. Five hundred barrels would just about fill her up—fill her up nicely.

A man in a rowboat came into the cove. The one sail on the boat had evidently been blown away, for only some strips of canvas were tied to the little mast.

Wesley Marrs, leaning against the main rigging of the *Lucy,* watched the weary oarsman approach.

"Looks as if he'd been boxin' the compass in strange waters," commented Wesley meditatively. "Look like you been headin' into a few head seas," he hailed.

"Captain Marrs?"

"Yes."

"I've been three days lookin' for you, Captain Marrs. Got such a thing as a drink of good liquor aboard, have you, Captain? I'm most famished."

Wesley led the way to the cabin and handed out a jug, a small jug, but so full a jug that from it the cork was yet to be taken. The messenger took the cork out and without help. He bit it out, and let the red rum of old Saint Pierre gurgle down after the manner in which all men said it should.

"Good?" asked Wesley.

The messenger sucked in his cheek, his lips kissed together lingeringly. "Good—m-m—you ought to try it yourself, Captain Marrs."

Wesley did try it—a small, safe drink. "It is good, ain't it?" and was about to put it back in the locker of his stateroom—was about to, but looking around and observing a wistful gathering he hadn't the heart. Six of his own crew and a dozen native fisherman were there, and they passed it along the locker, though not too rapidly. When Wesley got it back he "hefted" it. It felt pretty light. He shook it up to catch the sound of it. It was light. "Lucky 'twas the little jug," said Wesley, and he laid it at his feet with a sigh. "But what was it you was goin' to say?" he asked of the boatman he had rescued from famishing.

"John Rose, of Folly Cove—you know him, Captain?"

"For more than twenty year. What of John? Nothin' happened to John I hope?"

"Oh, John's in good health, Captain, an' he's got five hundred barrels as fine frozen herrin' as ever a man laid eyes on, and he says for you to come and get 'em."

"Five hundred barrels? Man, but that's good news—better have another little touch."

After that second drink, the boatman, who had been nursing a few little suspicions for two days now, thought he had better tell Captain Marrs of his meeting with Captain Glover. And he did, or rather began to. He was about one-quarter through when Wesley jumped for the companionway. "Break out the anchor and make sail," ordered Wesley, and then, dropping back into the cabin, and suggesting to the boatman that he had better have one more drink, he started to fill his pipe. With his pipe going freely Wesley could think more rapidly—could fathom things more surely.

"Harry Glover," said Wesley, to himself as he supposed, but really half aloud, "I know you, Harry Glover, and your father and your grandfather afore you, and all the rest of your forepeople on Cape Ann by hearsay, and not one of you I'd trust with so much as the price of a bait-knife—no. Now, let's see—Glover, he's got them herrin'."

"But how's he going to get 'em, Captain? John Rose is keepin' 'em for you," said the belated boatman at this point.

"Who in the devil," began Wesley, but recovering himself, pushed the jug toward the messenger. "About one more drink is what you need, and that about empties the jug, too. Take it and keep quiet, or I'll carry you up on deck and heave you over the rail, and heave the jug after you to make sure you go down.

"Let's see, now"—Wesley resumed his meditations—"he's got them herrin' and off long afore this. Now, where'll he go first? To Saint Peer? That's it, to Saint Peer for a few cases of wine to take home. And then? To Canso, of course, to see that girl that's makin' such a fool of him. Yes, and he'll make a great fellow of himself by givin' a case of cassy wine to her people. It's most Christmas-time, and he'll make a great hit, and it won't cost him too much—a dozen bottles of cassy. And then? Then he'll tell the girl, and everybody else in Canso, that he's the first vessel to leave Newf'undland with anything like a load of frozen herrin' this winter. And he'll be right—he'll be easy the first to Gloucester this season—or oughter be. And 'Let me tell you how I filled up,' he'll say, and go on to spin a fine yarn on how he got the best of Wesley Marrs. Never let on he lied and cheated, not Mister Glover. And they'll think he's a devil—yes, sir, a clean devil of a man. 'And Wesley Marrs,' he'll go on to say, 'Wesley's all right—he can handle a vessel pretty well, can Wesley, but when he gets to figurin' against Harry Glover——'"

Wesley drew a breath—"If I get near enough to lay my hands on him and don't welt the head off him, then may the dogfish get me and——"

"Anchor's hove short up," came down the companionway.

Five minutes later the *Lucy Foster* was off and away. "I'll chase him," muttered Wesley, "chase him clear to Gloucester, but I'll get him," and himself standing close to the wheel, he drove the *Lucy* out of Big Whale Gut and across Placentia Bay.

"Just a minute at Folly Cove to drop this blessed fool of a messenger John Rose sent, and just another minute to hail John himself and make certain, and then across the Gulf to Canso," said Wesley, and stood on the *Lucy's* quarter and watched her go along.

## III

It was night, with a northeast gale and a fall of snow making the thick night thicker. The *Lucy Foster* had come across the Gulf like a runaway horse, and now they were expecting to make a landfall soon.

Wesley was standing aft, when a long, low, warning moan came to them over the water. "There's the whistle—we ought to see Cranberry Light soon—watch out there for'ard."

The forward watch, hanging on to her forerigging and peering sharply ahead, soon called out: "There it is—no—it's a vessel's port light."

Wesley looked. "A vessel, sure enough, and hove-to, ain't she? Bring her into the wind till I speak her"—this last to the man at the wheel. The helmsman brought her up, and "Hi-i!" roared Wesley.

"Hi-i!" came back—"who're you?"

Wesley swore softly. "Harry Glover, by the Lord! Here, Charlie, you answer him. There ain't many knows you. Ask him what's wrong—and don't get too near him, you to the wheel."

"What's wrong?" called Charlie Green.

"Nothin'—just waitin' for a chance to go into Canso."

"Ask him why he don't go in—what's holdin' him back?" whispered Wesley. Charlie asked him.

"Why? Too thick to make the harbor to-night."

"Ask him, Charlie, what kind of a man he holds himself that he's afraid to make a harbor to-night?" Which Charlie did, in a more provoking tone than Wesley could ever have achieved.

"Who in hell are you that's so all-fired smart?" queried Glover. "Who're you, anyway?"

"Give him your own name, Charlie," said Wesley, and Charlie did.

"Charlie Green? I never heard of you before. What vessel is that?"

"Tell him to never mind what vessel, Charlie. Whatever vessel's here I'm not too frightened to put her into Canso to-night, say." Charlie so said.

"That so? You're the devil and all, ain't you? And when are you goin' in?"

"Right away."

"That so? And maybe you'll show me the way?"

"Yes, if you ain't too scared to follow. And I'll have a good story to tell when we get to Gloucester—not alone being scared to go in, but too scared even to follow behind when another man shows you the way."

"That so? Well, I don't see you goin' in, nor I don't see no ridin' light hangin' from your stern to show the way."

"No? Well, s'pose you follow on and stop talkin'."

A lantern was dropped over the stern of the *Lucy Foster,* Wesley put her wheel up, and the *Lucy* was off. Another moment, and they made out the green light of the *Calumet* coming after.

Wesley, chuckling to himself, sailed scandalous courses with the *Lucy*. "If I don't scare him 'bout half to death, and if him and me don't have a heart-to-heart talk after we come to anchor inside—if ever he comes to anchor inside! Let's see now, Charlie. There's Kirby Rock under our lee. I hope the *Calumet* carries a weather helm—for the crew's sake, I mean. And now west half no'the—I'll give him a scare. There's Black Rocks ahead—he's got to keep on now. And now for the Bootes—a nice little lot of ledges, the Bootes—but not to make a landin' on—six feet in spots and the surf breakin' fine over 'em. Hear it roar? Lord, yes, and see it. We'll hold up a bit, Charlie, or it's the *Lucy*'ll be gettin' into trouble. And now for Man-o'-war, another fine little spot—six or eight feet of water there—no'the three-quarters west. Oh, man, hear it roar! How's he makin' out behind? There he is, and scared blue, I'll bet, for fear she'll swing a foot out of the way. Let's see, now, where we ought to be! Let's see—man, but it's thick here!—let her go—off, now, Charlie. West no'west and a hair west, just a hair now, ought to take us inside Mackerel Rock. If Glover knows his business now, it won't matter; if he don't, then Lord help his name for master of a vessel. Enough on that course—shoot her up now by the Rock—no'the, quarter west. Go ahead, the *Lucy*'ll make it, don't fear. Man, she'll sail in the wind's eye, the *Lucy*. She'll shy off herself if we get too close. That's the girl—there she is—a good place to be by, that! And now for the reg'lar channel—no'west by west—and let her go! But how are they makin' out on the *Calumet*, d'y' s'pose?"

They were not making out on the *Calumet* at all. Evidently she did not carry a weather helm. From the *Lucy* they could make out her port light—for a while they thought she was past the ledge and all safe. Then the red light swung off to leeward. They soon heard a hail. Then a series of hails.

"Lord," said Wesley, "d'y' s'pose she struck?" and himself jumped to the wheel again. His first thought was to put the *Lucy* right back to the Rock; his second, and the one he acted on, was to get her lights out of sight and then to turn back, sail wide, and come up to the *Calumet* as though he had just come in the harbor himself. "They're safe for a while there, and there was no reason in the world why he couldn't have got by there if we did," said Wesley, and began to nose his way back.

He found the *Calumet* on the edge of the ledge, with the sea washing over her. She was pounding, and from her deck they heard the sounds that meant that a dory was to be launched. They could hear much talking, some free comment, and not a little profanity.

"Hi-i!" hailed Wesley, in his own person. "What vessel's that?"

"What? That you, Wesley?" came Captain Glover's voice.

"Why, is that you, Harry?" answered Wesley.

"When'd you come in?"

"Just shot in."

"Shot in! A night like this!"

"Why, yes. But what's wrong?"

"What's wrong? Everything's wrong. Some bloody pirate piloted us ashore and then went up the harbor and left us. What bloody ledge is this we're on?"

"I'm not sure, not having a chart handy; but it's a bad place, whatever it is."

"A bad place? I should say. We've just smashed our dory, and I'm afraid some of us will be washed over if the sea makes a little more. What'll we do?"

"Well, that's for you to say. You're master of your own vessel, and, of course, you know your own business. But I'll drop over a dory, if you say so. I'd rather handle live men now than corpses in the morning, myself."

"Well then, for the Lord's sake, hurry up, won't you?"

Wesley took off the crew of the *Calumet*. On his own deck he met Glover and spoke a little of his mind. "'Twas my intention, Harry Glover, to take it out of your hide, for stealin' them herrin' at Folly Cove, but as you're shipwrecked now it makes a difference. I'll take you up the harbor and leave you there." Which he did, and, further, let them have a dory to take them to the dock.

To Glover, at parting, he said, "You and me, Harry, better have no words over this—you know why. The consul here'll send your crew home at the expense of the Gover'ment, so they'll be all right."

"But the *Calumet*—I s'pose she'll break up where she is?"

"She may, and then she mayn't."

"Then I'd better go down when it moderates and see what I can do."

"That," answered Wesley, "is your business. As it is now, she's abandoned, and anybody's property that wants to board her."

"Oh, nobody'll board her in this weather—they'd be smashed on the ledges. Just as soon as it moderates—some time to-morrow, maybe—I'll be down with a tug and lighten her up."

Wesley did not wait until it moderated. That same night, at high water, the *Calumet* floated off. Five hundred barrels of frozen herring transferred to the *Lucy Foster* helped materially in the floating of the *Calumet*.

"Only eight hundred barrels of salt herrin' in her now—we oughter be able to get her home. She's squattin' pretty low in the water, but we oughter get her home. And do you, Charlie, take Dan and George and Tommie and follow on behind the *Lucy*," said Wesley, and in the morning light he led the way out of Canso Harbor.

## IV

The *Lucy Foster* came sailing into Gloucester Harbor, and in her wake was the *Calumet*. The *Lucy*, under not more than half sail, was acting like a vessel that was trying to coax along the other, which was moving most painfully. Wesley, from the *Lucy's* quarter, kept hailing out encouragement. "'Most home, Charlie—keep her goin'. There'll be good salvage for all hands, but a little extra for you, Charlie—keep her goin'. And them men to the pumps—ain't there just a little touch left all around in that big jug to hearten 'em up a little? It'd be too bad to have her sink on us now, and she into the dock, you might say. I'll run a bit ahead now, Charlie, and hail the steamboat people, so there'll be a lighter alongside by the time you're ready to anchor."

Knowing nothing of all this, but talking matters over with Mr. Duncan, was Fred Withrow, the owner of the *Calumet,* in Mr. Duncan's office. "Here's a telegram came four days ago from Glover, says that the *Calumet* went ashore the previous night while she was trying to make Canso Harbor. And now here's the second telegram, came three days ago, saying that as soon as the weather moderated he took a tug and went down to see how she was, but couldn't find her. And now, here's this long letter, came this morning, saying that he don't know what to make of it—that when he went down to look for her he could not find a trace of her. He says he thought she may have slipped off the ledge—whatever ledge it is he does not seem to know, it was such a black night and blowing so hard when he came in. But that she must have slid off and sunk, rolled over on her side and sunk, he is certain; because otherwise the spars at least would show. Now he's thinking of sounding the harbor, but wants to know my opinion of it first."

"Yes?" said Mr. Duncan. He and Withrow were not the best of friends.

"Yes. But I suppose you're wondering what it's all got to do with you. Well, Glover mentions in his letter that Wesley Marrs came into the harbor just after the *Calumet* went ashore. It was Wesley took the crew into port. But next morning, when he went down to look for the *Calumet,* Wesley was gone. I didn't know but what you had heard from Wesley."

"I haven't heard from Wesley since he left for Newfoundland, three weeks ago. I don't generally hear from him till he gets home. Wesley isn't much of a letter-writer."

It was just then that they heard a commotion, and, looking out of the window, saw the *Lucy Foster* and the *Calumet* coming to anchor in the stream.

"What!" exclaimed Withrow, and waited, after he had looked again, no longer than to glance doubtfully at Mr. Duncan before he flew out of the door.

After Mr. Duncan also had had another look and seen for himself that it was true, he sat down in his chair and tried to think it out. He was still trying to think it out when Wesley himself came in the door.

"Hi-i!" hailed Wesley, and taking one of Mr. Duncan's longest cigars, sat down and answered Mr. Duncan's first question by beginning to tell the story. It took just about the length of a cigar to tell it, for, while Wesley smoked fast, he also talked fast, and with that told barely more than the cold facts.

Barely more than the cold facts, yet one should have heard Wesley tell it; should have seen him hunch his shoulders wrathfully in the beginning when he was picturing Glover's sending the messenger astray; should have seen him bring his fist down on the desk when he drove the *Lucy* across the Gulf to head off Glover at Canso; then should have seen him lean back and roar with laughter when he told how Glover abandoned his vessel. And, finally, one should have caught a glimpse of his eyes through the halo of smoke when he said, "And 'twarn't no joke takin' them frozen herrin' out of the *Calumet* that night, and 'twas pump, pump, pump, and stand by on the *Lucy* all along the Cape shore, and me ready to take the crew off her any minute. Yes, sir. She leaked a little, did the *Calumet,* and she cert'nly did set scandalously low in the water at times, but we wiggled her home. Yes, sir, and there she is, out in the stream."

Having smoked out his cigar, Wesley naturally slowed up. "And I misdoubt that she'd stayed afloat of herself another half hour. There's a hole under her quarter that most of them herrin', if they knowed enough or didn't happen to be put away in pickle, could've swum their way through. A good man, that Charlie Green, Mr. Duncan; and if you could only've heard the twist he put into his voice when he was talkin' to Glover just afore he went into Canso Harbor that night! But a week on the railway oughter fix up the *Calumet* so she'll be as good as ever.

"But ain't that a good one on Glover, though? Hah, what? Glover, the—the—strategist? That's it—strategist—strat-e-gist! Ho-ho!" Wesley leaned back in his chair and blew the last ring up at the ceiling. "And John Rose—I don't cal'late John Rose'll feel so bad when he hears the whole story—hah, what? And Glover—ho-ho!—think of him tellin' his friends up to Canso how it happened—and leave it to him to tell it right; and after he gets through tellin' them that, of him hirin' a tug to go down and pull her off, and him cruisin' around lookin' for her—and not findin' her—ho-ho! But I s'pose we got to talk business now. What's the salvage law about this, Mr. Duncan? I've picked up a few vessels at sea in my time, but never one quite this way. How about the salvage, Mr. Duncan?"

"The vessel was abandoned, you say?"

"She cert'nly was."

"Well, then, our lawyer ought to be able to fix that up easily enough. There'll be a big salvage, don't you worry about that. And however it comes out, it will cost her owner a good many times more than if he hadn't got so oversmart a skipper for her. But you're laughing again, Captain—what is it?"

"I couldn't help laughin' to think of Withrow, too. I never did partic'larly like Withrow, either. What does he think, d'y' s'pose, Mr. Duncan?"

"Withrow? M-m—I wouldn't want to say. But I know what I'd think if it happened to one of my vessels, and I know what I'd say—and what I'd do, too."

"And what's that now, Mr. Duncan?"

"If it was one of my vessels, I'd see that the next vessel I built went to a skipper that ran a little more to seamanship and not quite so much to strategy."

"That's if she's to go fishin'?" commented Wesley.

"Of course—if she's to go fishing," agreed Mr. Duncan.

"That's me, too—a little plain, ordinary seamanship for me. But I'll be goin', I think. That oughter be a pretty good story to tell up the street—hah, what? And John Rose—I think I'll have to write a letter to John Rose about it. Yes, I think that's worth a little note to John—hah, what? Yes. But first I think I'll tell 'em up the street, for cert'nly up to the rooms they'll all admire to hear about Harry Glover and his strategy. Yes, sir, Harry and his strategy—ho, ho, ho, strategy!" and out the door and up the street went Wesley.

# XVI

## A MAN DIES

It was cold and blowy that day in the Bay of Islands. In Caplin Cove, in the lee of the high western shore when we came to moorings there, it was smooth enough; but in the broad reaches of the Bay the rough seas were roaring.

It was no day for small boats. The Gloucestermen might come driving in from the wide ocean outside, sail alow and sail aloft, letting sky to the clouds their high-peaked gaffs when up from the smother they lifted, but they were big and able Gloucester schooners.

No such dragging of sail for the little Newfoundland jacks. Stripped to trysail and jumbo they were. Even so, they needed to be having a sharp watch out for the mounting seas and the hard squalls which came whistling down off the high headland that the natives called Old Blow-Me-Down.

Of all the little native schooners that came beating into the Cove that day, we saw only one that was not under short canvas. Beyond where the spray was thrown over the rocks of Little Isles this one came into stays: under trysail, jumbo and whole foresail, and by the last of the lowering sun she headed up for the hard beat to Caplin Cove.

Every little jack in the Bay was pretty much like every other for tonnage and rig, and so it was difficult to name one from the other at a distance. From the steps of Mrs. Mack's boarding house we watched this little staggering one until there was no more light to watch her by. We went into supper still wondering who she could be, and what great business her skipper had on hand that he should be driving her so.

When Gloucestermen came ashore of an evening in Caplin Cove they usually laid a straight course for Mrs. Mack's. We had not finished our supper when we heard a noise outside. We did not have to see the owner of the voice to know that Tommie Clancy was on the way with everything set to make a roistering night of it. Swinging through the dining-room door he came, like his own big vessel before a gale of wind, and singing as he came:

I lay my courses wide and free—
"What ho! where away?" hails the happy sailor.
"Thar's right sparm critters whar them signs be!
"She blows! She flukes!" roars the greasy whaler.

And whether the wind be astern or ahead
What odds be it, boy, when all is said,
So we hold our course, be it east or west—
What can we do but our little damn best?

"What ho! she blows! and thar-r she breaches!"

"Your side-lights seem to be burning pretty bright to-night, Tommie," said somebody.

"They are, boy. And why not? The wind's goin' to haul into the east before morning, and then those of you who can break yourselves out of your warm bunks will be seeing by the dawn's gray light the *Arbiter* layin' a long wet sheet to the west'ard——

And a-west'ard she'll go, boy, a-west'ard she'll go,
Frozen herrin' to her hatches in her fore and after holds!"

Clancy passed on then to have a gossiping word with John Larkin and old Mrs. Mack, who was cooking supper in the kitchen; but the noise did not die out with Clancy's exit. In his wake was one of his crew, Archie Gillis. Clancy had his fits of quietness, but not Archie. He never slacked unless overborne by a quicker tongue and more powerful lungs:

"'Are your side-lights burnin' bright?'" he said.
"'Damn right they are and a white one overhead'—
"'She blows! she flukes and thar-r she breaches!
"'An' my steamin' lights o'erhead!'" he said.

So roared Archie, in imitation of his big skipper, and then:

"Hulloh! If here ain't Ben Morton!"

We turned, those of us who were not already facing that way, to see Ben Morton standing in the doorway.

"Did you see Ben to-day?" shouted Archie. "Did you see him drivin' her across the Bay to-day? We're in the *Arbiter*, for reachin' across from North Arm, when we spot this little jack in the lee of the Little Isles. 'It's Ben Morton's *Sister Sue*,' I says to the gang on deck.

"'How do you know it's the *Sue?*' says one of the gang.

"'By the rust on her jumbo,' I tells 'em, 'where Ben let it dry out on the anchor a year ago in Lark Harbor. And I ain't seen Ben in such a hurry since the day fourteen years ago when Jess Graham fresh in to Caplin Cove from the French Isles waves a five-gallon jug o' red rum over his head on Pitman's Wharf an' hollers down the wind for all hands to come an' have a taste.'"

"Ben"—Archie faced around to the man in the doorway—"I thought you and Martie Miller were haulin' herrin' down to Lark Harbor for Captain Larkin?"

Ben Morton made no answer.

"Where's Martie, Ben? Where'd you leave Martie, Ben?"

"Hush 'ee, boy, hush 'ee—Martie's gone."

"Martie's gone!"

"What's that about Martie?" Captain John Larkin and Tommie Clancy were staring in from the kitchen door.

"Aye, Captain John—Martie's dead. Gone to the west'ard, as he would say himself."

Larkin sat wearily down. He motioned Ben to sit beside him. "Don't tell me Martie is gone, Ben?"

"'Tis so, Captain John."

"Martie's gone! Martie Miller! What happened, Ben?"

"I'd been fearing it, Captain John. It was four days an' nights since you left Lark Harbor an' not an hour of it night or day did he lay in his bunk, or change his clothes, an' he wet from head to heel by tossin' spray an' chilled by the cold north winds. 'You be no longer a lusty young man, Martie, carin' not if ever you sleep or bite to eat you get. You be no longer a bouncin' youth, Martie,' I said. 'Man's life at your age is like to a vessel that do be strainin' at her moorin's. Have a care or else she'll part her cable an' go adrift for wider waters—wider than this little bay or the wide ocean itself. Have a care, Martie,' I said, 'or 'twill be the sciatica will overhaul you, as it does after the years of wet an' cold of many a good man of less than your age, Martie!'

"'Older than I was I may be, Ben,' he answers me, 'but it is never the rheumaticks will overhaul me. 'Tis this, Ben'—he lays a hand to his heart—'will give out on me when I go, the same bein' strained by more than the work of haulin' halibut trawls on offshore banks or herrin' nets in this or any other Bay o' Newf'ndland. When I go, Ben, 'twill be—whsst! sharp as ever your own headsails do slat when quick an' sudden you luff her in a strong breeze.'

"And quick as that he went, Captain John."

"When was it, Ben?"

"This mornin' early, Captain John. All gray it was, an' cold, and out in the open bay the little seas were stirring to the first of the westerly breeze. We were come aboard from spreadin' a hundred barrels o' fine fat herrin' over night to freeze on the north beach o' Lark Harbor. 'Captain John's vessel,' says Martie, 'she will be soon to anchor in Caplin Cove, waitin' only for a full hold in the *Sue* to be headin' to the west'ard and home. Always wantin' to be hurryin' to the west'ard is Captain John—to where a warm bright home and a loving family do be always waitin' him. We must make no delay for him, Ben.'

"He thought no one like you, and so he spoke grievin' that the herrin' ran no more freely in the Upper Bay an' that the *Sue* lacked two hundred barrels of a full load for you, Captain John."

"He was always one to grieve more for another than for himself, Ben. How was it he died?"

"He was walkin' aft on the *Sue,* makin' for the cabin after havin' a bite o' breakfast for'ard. He lingered on her quarter to feel the weight an' course o' the wind, an' he looked up to see what weather might be breedin' in the clouds that were driftin' gray an' solid as great boulders from off the Western headlands.

"He raised one hand to get the feel o' the mornin' breeze. Down fell the hand like something apart from himself. His head dropped—and his body. He lay with his elbows on the cabin house, tryin' to hold himself like from fallin' to the deck. Myself and my lad, who'd come on deck from breakfast, too, we bore him down into the cabin. He was too solid an' heavy a man to be stowed into my bunk, an' we laid him on the cabin floor. I put a pillow under his head, the same restin' agin the bulkhead of the afterhold.

"Soon he said, feeble enough, too: ''Tis come, Ben. Soon now I will be makin' my last run to the west'ard. You must take me to Caplin Cove, where surely by now will be a Gloucesterman or two with her full load all ready to sail for home. It may be that Captain John himself, that I bunked an' messed an' stood watch with in the years of my young manhood, will not be ready to sail. If so it be, Ben, I know Captain John will please me in this, Ben—the kind heart in him always—he will hail one that is bound to the west'ard who will take me home.' He thought no one like you, Captain John."

"He thought no more of me than I of him, Ben. What then?"

"The last of the flood tide was running in, an' the last o' the flood off the north beach o' Lark Harbor does veer a vessel's stern to the open bay. Beyond the Bay the sun by now was rising, bringin' a bit o' warm color and cheer into the chill o' dawn. Into the cabin o' the *Sue* a shaft o' sunlight strikes. His eyes opened and he smiled like at the beam o' sunlight on the cabin floor. He rolled his head to see up the open companionway, an' the sun that was liftin' by now above the *Sue's* stern did shine fair onto his face. An' wi' the sun on his face an' smilin' like, he died."

"And you brought his body through the gale to Caplin Cove in the little *Sue?*"

Ben pressed his fingers into his eyes that were still shot with blood from the hard wind; ran his fingers through his beard that was still wet with spray. He sighed.

"I did so, Captain John. 'Take me to Caplin Cove,' he had said. Five days ago was the first time ever I saw him, but such was the lovely nature o' the man there was no denyin' him. An' we made sail on the *Sue* and put out into the open Bay where the seas were mounting high an' the gale roarin' down off Old Blow-Me-Down. Like to hove her down more than once I did beatin' across the Bay from Lark Harbor, but 'Take me to Caplin Cove' he had said, and who could deny him?"

"And he's aboard the *Sue* now, Ben?"

"No, Captain John. I tied the *Sue* up to Pitman's Wharf, and we bore him up the wharf to the trader Mendum's place. An' he is up there now waitin' while a carpenter that Mister Mendum called in will be makin' a birchwood box to lay his poor body in. I will be goin' back there now to see that all is well with him."

Tommie Clancy, after a sign to John Larkin, followed Ben Morton out of the door. "I will finish my bite and go on after you," said Captain John.

All that most of us knew of the dead man was that his shipmates called him Martie, and seemed very fond of him. We others recalled him as one of those quiet, unobtrusive men of whom people rarely take special notice. It was Captain John Larkin who told us more about him.

The first trawl that ever I hauled (it is Captain John speaking at Mrs. Mack's) was with Martie Cluett for dory-mate, the pair of us hardly more than well-grown boys on the Grand Banks at the time, and the pair of us having great dreams of the day when we would be masters of fine vessels; or if not the pair of us, myself at least.

Shipmate, watchmate, and dory-mate we were to each other, and one to depend on was Mártie, especially in the hard winter weather. A better man than I he was in more ways than one; and yet by the time I was master and part owner of a fine vessel, he was still a hand with not half the time money enough to pay for a week's room rent ahead in his boarding house ashore.

He was sober, well behaved, industrious, but never one to get ahead. He emptied his pockets as another man might empty his lungs. It was natural to him as breathing—to be giving his money away. Any cunning land fisherman on the Gloucester water front had but to cover his begging hook with any sort of bait and the trustful Martie was caught.

Knowing that it was not in his nature to plan for his own advancement, I could not forbear saying to him one day:

"God forbid, Martie, that I would harden your heart against any poor unfortunate, but you must not go on forever without a thought or two to the day ahead. Why not begin now to save against the day when you will be able to buy an interest in a good vessel and go master of her?"

"Surely, John, you do not think a dull wight like me is fit to go master of a fine vessel," he answered.

"Amn't I master of a vessel?" I answered to that. "And when was I, in the days we sailed as hands together, any cleverer than you at hauling or heaving a trawl or handling a dory in a seaway, or a vessel in a breeze of wind? What knowledge of tides and winds and the ways of fish on the shoal banks have I that you haven't, Martie? If I am fit to be master of a vessel, why not you?" To that I added, having a thought to stir his ambition: "Martie, you are not the kind of a man that God intended to go single through life. Haven't you ever thought of getting married?"

"Oh, but haven't I? Often, often, John, haven't I thought I would like to have a family and be doing my full duty by them."

"Won't you be better doing your full duty by them if you can give them a few of the comforts of life?"

"That's true, John. You are right, John. And no fear I would not look after wife and children. I've often thought, John—I grow terribly lonesome at times—that it must be a wonderful thing to be dancing your children on your knee. And wonderful, John, to see them growing up, and in their good time having children of their own, please God."

He agreed then to save his money. And he did, though a terrible time he had evading the traps of the many who formerly looked to him for what they called loans—loans that were never repaid. But he escaped them, and in good time he had enough in the bank to buy a quarter share in a good vessel.

One day, I being just home from a three months' salt fish trip, I learned that he was about to be married. I asked my wife who the girl was, and she told me, adding the word that she was no wife for Martie.

My wife was not one to belittle another woman, and I had a fear then that Martie would be like an overladen vessel for all his life again; but a terrible thing it is, to destroy a man's trust in the woman he loves—I said nothing to Martie against the marriage.

It took the half of Martie's savings to fit out a home to his bride's liking; and the other half went in fine living for the first year of their married life. She had only to ask for whatever entered her head to have and Martie would rush to get it for her. Himself being home from sea two or three or four days a month, but little of this extra comfort came his way.

With his savings gone, also gone was all hope of a vessel for Martie. It is true that a smart fisherman is sometimes given command of a vessel with never a dollar to put into her, and there were those who said that there was a lack of something in Martie that he was never offered a vessel; but the greatest lack in Martie was not knowing how to set himself forward. It was always the thought of another's welfare, never his own, that stirred him to active doings.

There was a baby born and then like a man walking the halls of Heaven was Martie in his time ashore; and then, the baby boy being but three months old and Martie out to sea, his wife ran away with a strange man. No one in Gloucester ever saw her again.

Martie had no word of blame for her. It had always been a wonder to him why she ever saw anything in him. "A plain, rough fisherman like me—how could she?" he would say.

With the baby's future to stir him and no foolish wife—to call her no worse—like a head wind working always against him, Martie might yet have had his master's papers; but it must have been written in the log that he was never to sail out of Gloucester the master of a vessel. A married sister of his wife's offered to bring up the baby, and Martie thought her wonderful to so offer; but as fast as Martie could make a dollar the sister-in-law would take it from him for the baby's keep. She had only to say it was for the baby, and Martie would empty his pockets.

The sister-in-law had a husband who never did two days' work in one week again after Martie came to live with them. His health was bad, it seemed.

"The poor man! It would make your heart ache, John, if you could see the twistin' and turnin' of him when the lumbago does grip him," Martie would say.

"When the laziness grips him!" was what I felt like saying.

Martie's whole life now was his boy. He would hurry away from the vessel after a trip, clapping his hands together and shouting while he wasn't yet fair in the door: "Oh, the boy! Oh, the boy! Where is he, where is he, the little man?" And the boy would come running to the sound of his voice, and Martie would want for nothing else on land or sea.

The plans he had for the boy! He would never go fishing, never! No such hard life for him! No, sir! Martie would ask me well all manner of questions about engineering and the law and medicine, striving to see a way for the boy's betterment when he would be man grown.

He would come home after a trip to sea and not stir out of the house for whole evenings at a time. In love and wonder he would sit there watching the boy, he at his history or geography or whatever it was. He shipped with me when the boy was ten years of age for no other reason I do believe than to be talking of the lad to some friendly soul who knew him in the lonesome hours out to sea.

He was not a strong boy. Even Martie came to understand in time that the boy would not live to grow up. He used to dread to put out to sea toward the last of it, fearing the boy would be gone before he would be home again; but someone had to do the providing, so to sea he would go.

The boy died. Martie made no complaint; when he could bear to talk about it he only said: "I should be thankful, no doubt, for the joy of having him as long as I did."

It was disquieting to see the change in him after the boy died. He was no man to grow bitter, but all his sweet nature could not hold him from brooding. A man may grow cheerful and strong on toil and danger—I have seen that in many men in the hard winter bank fishing—but to brood overlong on secret sorrow—it is like a vessel's hawser that can be chafing its strands on cruel, hidden rocks and her crew know of it only when the last strand is parted and the vessel herself is borne loose from her moorings.

Thought of the boy was chafing Martie's heart-strings, and thinking to get him out of sight and sound of where the boy lay in his grave, I got him to come with me on this trip to Newfoundland.

After supper at Mrs. Mack's, we followed John Larkin to the trader Mendum's place to see poor Martie.

It was December. There was a moon, throwing now a shadow and now a light, such light as it was, from behind lumpy, hard-driving clouds. It shone dimly on pools of water in the frozen road, on the scum of ice forming over them. It threw light enough to bring into high relief the frosted crests of the rolling seas in the Bay. When behind the clouds it hid and we could no longer clearly see, we could hear things—the dirge of a high wind over rough waters, of a heavy surf over rocks.

A man was working with hammer and saw outside the trader's place when we reached there. It was Tommie Clancy.

"There was a carpenter that the trader Mendum hired to do this job," explained Clancy, "but he growled about being late for his supper. 'Get to hell along to your supper,' I said, 'but leave your tools an' that bag of nails. I'll pay you for the nails.' He went along. The box is done. I'll knock together a couple o' trestles now and join you inside."

The dead man had been laid on the goods counter. Like a man on watch Ben Morton was sitting on a soap-box near by.

John Larkin looked down at the dead man.

"He hadn't shaved for three or four days by the looks of him, Ben?" said Captain John.

"What with haulin' an' freezin' an' the rough weather in the lower Bay, thinkin' only of filling the hold o' the *Sue,* small time he had for shavin', Captain John."

"I know, Ben. Is there a barber in Caplin Cove, Ben?"

"In Caplin Cove, nor in all the bay hereabout there be no barber, Captain John. It's every man shaves hisself or does let his beard grow as the Lord Hisself ordained it."

John Larkin glanced appealingly, hopefully, from one to the other of the group of us who had followed him from the boarding house. Tommie Clancy had come in and was setting up two trestles in the middle of the floor.

"I never shaved anybody but my own self in all my life. How about you, Tommie?" asked Captain John.

"I never shaved any man except myself in all my life either, John, and never myself when there was a barber handy. But if no one else will try it, I'll try it. Here, Archie! My shaving gear is on the shelf over my bunk—run down to the vessel and get it for me."

Archie Gillis was soon back with the shaving gear. Clancy heated water on top of the stove in the store, borrowing a new basin from Mendum's stock to heat it in.

John Larkin took the oil lamp from its bracket against the wall and held it over Martie while Clancy shaved him. Nature never intended Clancy for a barber, but—love and a supernatural patience guiding his hand—in time the job was done. The smooth face of the dead man lay revealed—a rugged face with fine lines around the lips and eyes.

"There is one thing lacking yet," said Captain John. "There will be strange men here to-night that never knew Martie for what he was in life. Don't disturb him until I come back."

We were wondering what he had gone for. When he returned, it was with a suit of black clothes and a white shirt, white collar and black tie, his own best shore-going clothes. With the utmost care the rough outer clothing and sea boots were removed, the white shirt and black suit drawn over the stiff limbs. "There!" said John Larkin—"that is more befitting for the man he was."

The birch box was brought in and set on the trestles. Martie was lifted from the counter and laid in the box.

Larkin dropped to his knees. Clancy, famed for many things but never before for piety, knelt and prayed with him.

Rising from his knees and standing at the foot of the box, John Larkin fixed his eyes on Marty's face. Presently he spoke his thoughts:

"Hardly one of us here but can predict with moderate success what wind to-night or to-morrow will prevail in the Bay, or even it may be for a good space in the ocean outside; but who among us can forecast the winds o' Fortune? Some among us have but to lay a course and a fresh wind will seem to be flowing always over our quarter rail. But for others—and it would seem as if no matter what course they choose to sail—those same winds will be always hauling ahead to check their way.

"There you lie to-night, Martie, a man who in all your sailing life caught but few fair slants o' wind; and when the wind would come fair for you, but little use did you make of it. It was like you, when only a fair fresh passage lay before, to be putting back and helping some less fortunate one in distress.

"You heaved and hauled many a heavy trawl in your life, Martie, and heaving and hauling you never left a dory-mate doubting were you doing your full share. And many a hard watch you stood to the wheel of a vessel, and, standing so, no watch mate ever had to look aft to see was the vessel safe in your hands."

John Larkin paused to gather his thoughts for a more formal eulogy of his friend.

"In the days of ancient Egypt, when a King would die, the high priests would swathe his body in fine perfumed linen and lay the same down in a golden casket. One here and there would have quantities of precious jewels buried with him, and over his grave they would rear a mighty pyramid. Others would be interred in marble mausoleums, with armed sentries standing guard over the hallowed remains."

John the Scholar they called him in Gloucester, and he was not averse to airing his book knowledge at times. While he ran on, men from the native jacks and Gloucester schooners were quietly entering the trader's store; and Tommie Clancy had early dispatched Archie Gillis with whispered instructions that the rest of us couldn't make out. When Gillis returned, it was with a ten-gallon keg on his shoulder; and his manner of handling it proclaimed that it was no empty keg.

"Sh-h—Skipper, here it is!" hissed Gillis.

"Sh-h—softly, softly!" warned Clancy. He motioned over his shoulder, whereat Gillis tiptoed with it into the back room of the store.

John Larkin had ceased his speech and the trader Mendum was whispering something to Clancy, who replied with a passionate shake of his head.

"No, no!" Clancy almost shouted aloud. He motioned us to the rear room and led the way himself. Once inside, he waited for us to find our places, for the scuffling of feet to cease.

"Is everybody settled? Yes? All right! A hint was given me a while ago to draw a cold sheet over Martie, lock him in here by his lonesome self and we go on to our bunks aboard our vessels for the night. I said no. It would please Martie better, I know, if we stayed to keep him company till it is time for him to be going aboard whatever vessel will be taking him to Gloucester in the morning."

He paused for expressions of opinion from the increasing crowd in the room. Getting only nods of approval, he hoisted the keg which Gillis had brought in onto a table before him. He looked around. He saw Mendum the trader staring in from the doorway. Clancy made a significant peremptory gesture to the trader, who grimaced slightly and went back into the outer room.

Clancy turned back to the crowd of us. "Now then, you have heard Captain John tell what high honors were paid some great people of history when they died. Captain John, a kindly soul always, says that maybe some of those important people were well worth all the honor paid them, but to his mind—and there is where he is right—the full half of 'em weren't fit to bait a trawl for his man who is lying dead here to-night.

"He has told us about the Pharaohs and the Alexanders and the Cæsars and the Napoleons, and, being always a friendly soul even as he is a scholar, he has given them all that's due them.

"Now then, Martie Miller that many of us knew and loved is dead. An' there's no golden casket encasin' his mortal body an' there won't be, nor any pyramid nor marble monument half a mile high to mark his grave; but as Captain John also said, that needn't stop us, his good friends here who knew him, from honoring his memory in our own little way.

"I have here"—Clancy tapped the keg—"some red rum from the French Islands, red rum that never paid duty to any crowned head—as why should it?"

"Aye, boy, why should it?" echoed voices around the room.

Mendum the trader was now entering with a dozen or more new tin cups from his stock. "Good red rum will never take the shine off 'em," said Clancy to the trader. He filled the cups and passed them around, saving one for himself.

Clancy held his up before their eyes:

"Now, then! There's many of us who are left in this world—only the Lord knows why—and men like Martie Miller are taken. Men who have given more thought to the matter than any of us here tell us that the next world is better than this. It must be, or scalawags like myself or Archie Gillis and a few more of us here would not be left so long in this one. Certainly for the sake of the Martie Millers of this world I hope it is so. Peace to the soul of Martie Miller, who put ten times more into life than he took out of it. What I think of Martie I can say in ten words, and so can John Larkin: Here's to a good dory-mate and shipmate—can I say more than that?—a damn good shipmate. Peace to your ashes, Martie boy! Drink hearty all!"

All hands drank hearty.

The word had gone around and others were coming in, some kneeling in prayer in the outer room and pausing to say a word to John Larkin and Ben Morton who were standing watch beside the body. All who came found their way eventually into the back room and there remained, after being served a drink of red rum, to listen to friendly voices telling of Martie.

"I wouldn't mind dyin' myself if I thought people'd talk about me like that!" whispered Archie Gillis hoarsely.

With the first finger of the morning light pointing into the Bay, Tommie Clancy nailed down the top boards on the birchwood box. Half a dozen of us then shouldered the box and carried it to the *Arbiter,* where we laid it down on the deck.

"Both holds are filled—jammed to the hatches, John, but there is room in the cabin," said Clancy.

"And you won't want the cabin for yourself and the crew?"

"I'll be wanting no cabin nor will any of the crew on this passage home. All hands will move into the fo'c'sle so that Martie can be having the cabin to himself."

Clancy's crew had already moved their bedding and other gear out of the *Arbiter's* cabin. They now unbolted the cabin stove from the floor, emptied it of hot ashes and stowed it in the lazarette. The box was passed down the companionway and set up on the trestles on the cabin floor.

It was then shored against the lockers and the cabin roof.

Lines were lashed around it and made fast to the bunk boards.

Clancy drew the cabin hatch and locked up the cabin.

"She can roll her hatches under now," said Clancy. "She can roll keel up if it pleases her, and there will be no upsetting of Martie's body."

"It's a fair strong breeze, Tommie, and like to be stronger. You will have him home in good season?" said John Larkin.

"I'll waste no time along the road, John."

"And you'll see to it that he's buried beside his boy?"

"I'll see to it, John."

"That will please him, Tommie. And now fair wind—a fair strong wind home to you, boy!"

John Larkin stepped ashore, Clancy took the wheel of the *Arbiter*. Sail had already been made on her and now we cast off her wharf lines, and out into the open bay with a tight sheet she edged, out past where the white spume of Little Isles was tossing and the surf-like great guns booming, out past where from down off the high, hard head of Old Blow-Me-Down the hard squalls were whistling.

She flushed her deck deep in the green water, she rolled her mast-heads low to the white squalls. With a long wet sheet she squared her stern to the waters of the Bay; past the headlands and out into the wide waters of the wide ocean she made her tumbling way.

We watched her till the last high corner of her main topsail was gone below the western horizon; and went then to breakfast to Mrs. Mack's, where John Larkin gave us the history, as I have set it down here, of Martie Miller.

"A good shipmate," John Larkin in conclusion—"what more can I say of him?"

## XVII

## BEYOND THE HORIZON

It was one of those nights that sometimes come to Georges: air without motion, sea serenely still.

One by one the men coiled in their lines, left their berths by the vessel's rail, salted down and stowed the fish, turned into their bunks, and soon were sleeping soundly. All but three or four, who, with the passenger, were not yet wearied; and these presently began to wonder, and, after a while, to venture guesses as to when the skipper, who was John Larkin, would come below. They could hear him walking the quarter, evidently striving to tread softly, but clearly failing, for one who had a mind to sleep, turning again in his bunk, cried querulously, "I wish the old man'd get out of those red-jacks."

"Hush, boy," interposed old Bob, who knew the skipper longest; "something's vexed Captain John. He'll work it off, and then he'll come and tell us what it was about."

And he came below at last, but not yet in his usual good temper. Plainly it was as old Bob had said—something had vexed him; and as nobody, as a rule, has much to say on a fishing vessel while the skipper is put out about anything, so now respectful silence held the cabin—held until, after the various uneasy movements and rumbling sighs which in him betokened vexation, he settled into his chair and began the preparations for the long-delayed night smoke; whereat gentle leading questions were inserted into the silence, first by old Bob, then by the less venturesome, all with a view to draw Captain John, who took no immediate heed, but exactly cut the tobacco and filled the bowl, carefully tamped the brown weed with his forefinger, and smartly drew the match across his thigh.

Pu-u-f-f! pu-u-f-f! pu-uff! puff! Gradually he established a good draught; slowly the marks of annoyance faded from his brow—which, incidentally, was a fine brow, with noticeable development above the deep-set, glowing eyes, and of a white that lay like a broad band between the bronze of cheek and chin below and the iron gray of the thick hair above. At length, as he would have said himself, he eased his sheets and let her run.

"Did you ever, when you were walking along the street, hear a child utter some foul word that he probably no more knew the meaning of than if 'twas a bit of some foreign language? Yes, of course. We all have; and never heard but what we felt—not angry, altogether, but grieved and shocked to think of what an upbringing that child was getting. Well, that was something like the way I felt to-night when up on deck young Russell, because some little thing went wrong, had to curse and swear and blaspheme as he did. He said things, and at his age no more notion of the awful things he was saying than the little child that utters oaths on the street—oaths that he's heard his elders using. I stopped him, of course, after a while; but my mind's been on it since. I tell you I don't like it. I'd known young Russell's father—shipmates we'd been for many a year before he was lost; and thinking of him up there while I was walking the deck alone a while ago, I got to thinking of our own young days, and the *Didymus,* and that night which none of us who were there will ever forget—the night Eb Stone was struck down at the rail. Bob, there, was one of that crew, and he, too, has been a changed man since. You never heard of that?"

The passenger had heard of it from a dozen sources, but never a first-hand version of it; and so "Never from one of the crew," he answered now.

"Well, you'll hear it now from one who was there, and then you won't wonder, maybe, why I was so disturbed a while ago. This time I speak of the *Didymus* was hand-lining on Georges here, and those few of the crew now alive are a good many years older than they were then. Young fellows all we were, few of us more than twenty-five, and among us were eight or ten of the most blasphemous men that ever sailed out of Gloucester. To explain how they came to be that would be a long sermon on one thing or another. They came from people who were more concerned that the world should think well of *them* than that they should themselves do right. They weren't old enough then to have got to where they could separate the true from the false; so, seeing their elders preaching one thing and practising another, they come to the way of thinking that what their elders preached, as well as their elders themselves, must be in the wrong. From fearing God too much they come to fear Him too little. In no other way can I explain them. And so with them 'twas a daily riot of scoffing, blaspheming, mocking what men should hold holy. Maybe some of them pretended to be worse than they were, after the manner of young men at times; but there they were, that hard crew of the *Didymus*.

"Well, this trip they were doing the usual things in the usual way, invoking the devil, defying the Almighty, profaning sacred things. A common thing with them when they went to their berths by the rail, before they hove over their line of fish, was to throw over a copper or a nickel—generally a copper, they coming mostly of thrifty ancestry—and, as it dropped into the sea, to call by name the particular power they had it in mind to ridicule. 'Come up out of the sea, you fork-tailed Beelzebub,' they'd call, casting in the coin, 'and show us your horned head till I clout it with an oar'; or, 'Come up, whoever You are that knows all and sees all, and scare me blue, as they say You can.' But that's as much as I dare repeat now, though one time they slipped off the end of my tongue as the swash off a rolling deck.

"And so it came to the night that Eb Stone came on deck, saying he couldn't sleep, and guessed he'd fish for a while. There was nobody else awake at the time but myself. I was on watch and tending to my line, too, as a man on watch quite often does, when he's not overtired and the night is fine. Having to stay awake anyway, a man might as well be fishing and adding to his store as be doing nothing. This night when Eb came up I thought it would be a good chance to go below and get a mug of coffee. Eb could have an eye out, and there was no danger anyway, for it was a wonderfully fine night anyway—'twas the look of to-night made me think of it, even as much as young Russell's words a while back—clear as could be, except for the little spats of clouds drifting across the moon and throwing small, little shadows onto the sea. A quiet sea it was, too, the same as it is to-night, smooth as the oilcloth on this cabin floor. A wonderful night altogether, I couldn't help remarking to Eb as I was about to drop below.

"'Yes,' said Eb—to the rail he was then and ready to bait up—'mighty fine night to get a hook into a few people from the other world. I wonder, now, would I pull up a devil if I was to throw a penny over?' and picked up his line to overhaul it. 'And bring my knife from my bunk when you come up, will you, John? But no hurry—there's a couple of baits here still fresh enough to use.'

"The last thing I saw as I sank down the companionway was Eb ready to cast over his line as he stood by the rail. Well, I drew a mug of coffee from the pot on the stove. It was wonderfully quiet below as well as on deck. Not a sound from out of the bunks, where a dozen men were sleeping. You know how, among ten or twelve healthy men, there will always be two or three, at least, to turn and toss, especially if they've eaten a hearty supper; but that night they were all breathing like infants. Unnaturally quiet, altogether, I was thinking—so quiet that before lifting the mug of coffee to my lips I couldn't help looking toward the bunks again to make sure there really were men in 'em. Yes, they were occupied—of course 'twas foolish ever to doubt it. And yet, after that, I had to look up the hatchway to assure myself again by the sight of the peeking moon and the little patches of drifting clouds that I wasn't in a dream. But there they were, all the tranquil heavens.

"Well, I began to grow lonesome then—almost called to Eb once, just for the companionship of a human voice; but I thought again how foolish that would be, and turned to my coffee. The coffee was good and hot, and with two or three mouthfuls of that inside me I began to feel better. And yet I looked up the companionway to the sky again—and I simply couldn't get over it, such a supernaturally quiet night it was!

"And all at once, while I was looking up—I never knew why, certainly I didn't intend to—I set down my cup of coffee, and I found myself trying to catch my breath; which couldn't have been for any lack of air—there was plenty of air, the companion slides drawn far back—but my lungs seemed not to want it. It didn't smell right to me, that air. 'Twas like something decaying. And, trying to pick up the mug of coffee again, my fingers felt numb. I grew scared, I did. 'What in God's name is the matter?' I heard myself saying, but not like myself, either—much as though it was somebody else talking. 'But I *will* pick it up,' I said, like somebody was daring me to do it, and grabbed the mug of coffee suddenly, as though I was afraid somebody would really stop me. And I got it, too, but my fingers barely on the handle when such a shriek! Just one shriek. There wasn't any notion to compare it to anything then, but I've often thought since that if 'twas a lost soul being dragged over the brink of hell I'd expect he'd shriek like that.

"One breath before, and I thought nothing short of a call to judgment could have waked that crew for'ard; but with that cry from above every man of them leaped from his bunk. None of 'em needed more than boots and trousers to be dressed, but some, not even waiting for that, rushed on deck to see what it was. Eb's deck berth was on the starb'd side, just for'ard of the fore-rigging; and there we found him, stretched full length beside the rail, his feet to the cleat under the pin-rail and his head almost against the drumhead of the windlass. And that wasn't all. His line was cut clean off at the rail; not broke off, nor bit off, but cut clean off, as with a knife. Said somebody, 'He must have cut it himself,' and we looked for his knife, and couldn't find it. And then I remembered Eb couldn't have had a knife on deck—he'd asked me to get his from his bunk when I dropped below for a mug-up. And, sure enough, under the mattress in Eb's bunk we found it, where he always kept it when he wasn't fishing; and nobody else's knife was missing from its place.

"We looked out to sea then, and there wasn't a thing there—no craft, no light, no sail, no floating thing of any kind; and 'twas the kind of a night, too, to see far, but nothing there; only the awful quiet and the drifting bits of clouds across the sky, and the little shadows they threw on the sea, which was itself so smooth that not even the play of the everlasting tides was rippling the surface of it.

"We carried him below, stiff and motionless, and laid him on the cabin floor. We called to him; and before his eyes, wide open and staring up to the roof of the cabin, we waved things, even the tintype of his girl we took from the shelf in his bunk. But not the smallest twist of his lips, nor quiver of his eyelids, to show that he heard or saw.

"There was nothing to it but put for home. So we up-anchor; and I mind how mournful sounded the clinking of the chain through the hawse-hole, and, winching in, there were men on that vessel who dreaded standing on the side of the windlass where Eb's body had lain. Arrived in Gloucester harbor, we carried Eb to the house of his only brother, and there we laid him on the lounge in the parlor. And an awful duty that—bearing a dead man in from sea."

"But *was* he dead then, Captain John? I always heard——"

"Well, as to that, he was dead, and yet he wasn't dead. He lay there stiff and stark, with never a word or moan, and the doctor came; and another doctor came; and another doctor came, but none of 'em could say what was the matter with poor Eb. And seven nights from the night he was struck down the last flutterings of his heart stopped entirely."

Tick, tick, tick, went the cabin clock. Tick, tick, insistently, until it gained the skipper's attention. "Aye, I 'most forgot her," said the skipper, and stood up to have a look. "She'll be a few seconds fast, I'm thinking," and compared it with the superb little chronometer that set in a polished cedar case in his room. "But only a few seconds—gains maybe four seconds a day. Pretty good that, when you allow for the pitching of the vessel and where it has to hang. But it was always a great little clock that," and this last he almost whispered. "Most nine o'clock already." Carefully he replaced the chronometer, and presently closed the stateroom door behind him.

The passenger turned from the blank door to old Bob. "Surely he's not turning in?"

"'Sh—!" warned old Bob.

And silence held the cabin again, till the door was slid back, and the skipper, resuming his chair and leaning forward, fastened his gaze on the hot coals in the stove.

"But, Captain"—the passenger was consumed with curiosity—"during that seven days and nights, didn't Eb Stone ever come to sufficiently to offer a word of explanation, any word or sign to throw a little light on the matter?"

At sound of the passenger's voice the skipper came out of his reverie. Tightly he closed his eyes, as if to shut out the pictures in the fire, and over them pressed his tense finger-tips. "Eb? Never a word. He died without speaking."

"But didn't the doctors have anything to say?"

"What could they? They wanted to cut poor Eb open, but Eb's brother wouldn't stand for it. 'No,' he said, 'it's something more than doctors can explain,' and had him buried without an autopsy."

"And what did you think yourself, Captain?"

"What I think about what happened to Eb is no matter. Anybody who cares can explain it away to his satisfaction without drawing on the supernatural. Eb could have had heart trouble and there's no denying that there are frightful-looking creatures in the ocean's depths. I never saw any myself, but it is foolish to deny that they aren't there. The point is that from the day of Eb's burial his shipmates never again cast ridicule on things that other people venerated. We became a different crew aboard the *Didymus*.

"For my own part, I was never a blasphemer, but living with blasphemers had brought me to a careless way of thinking of sacred things. With the others of our crew I became a better man, and from being a better man I came to have the courage to marry a girl that I'd almost begun to think was never to be for me; and, marrying her, life began to take on new aspects. It was no longer hard and gray, though 'twas terrible enough at times—mostly through fear for her. For one thing, she had not exactly a dread of the sea, but a dread of what it might do to me—in winter-time especially. You see, she was the kind that knew—whether I was near her or away from her didn't matter—she knew when danger threatened me. She'd wake out of her sleep at night—many's the time she's told me, and the children have heard her, too—and cry out my name and pray to God to save me. And when next I'd get home, after I was quiet and calm under the home influence, and no distress to hear it, she'd tell me, and, coming to look into it, sure enough I'd find that on the night or day, at the time she said, myself or the vessel was in more or less danger. Sometimes I had to strain my memory to find grounds for her alarm, but there'd nearly always be something, maybe some little thing, that any man would forget two minutes after it happened, but yet a terrible matter 'twould be to a timid and loving woman ashore."

"'*Nearly always,*' you said, Captain?"

"Nearly always, that's right. There were times when I couldn't discover the least ground for her fright; occasionally, on coming home from the calmest trips imaginable, she'd have her fears to tell. And when I'd laugh at her then, she'd only say 'twas there just the same. 'You don't know what might have been threatening you in the dark and you not able to see it, but I can see it,' she'd say.

"No man could've been married to my wife long and not be a better man. I came to appreciate her for what she was, and coming home from sea and meeting her again got to be what I lived for. I came, too, to believe in the mysterious power she had of knowing how things had gone with me. Even when there'd been no particular danger, she'd know whether I'd had a hard trip or a pleasant one; but saying nothing of it at the moment, she'd meet me at the door with just the word to suit my feelings, though, again, as I said, never any long speeches till I'd been made comfortable generally.

"At last it came to what I want to tell you about. I'd got a fine little chronometer for taking some people off a wreck, and by and by I took some off another dismasted vessel—at great peril, as the resolutions went with 'em said, though 'twas just an ordinary sea running at the time. But, anyway, I got another chronometer, both the same winter. And my wife says I must give her one and keep one on the vessel. Which I did. There in my room, now, is mine—you saw me go to it a while ago. By it I take care to set the cabin clock every few days, and after every trip I take it ashore and compare it with my wife's at home; and if they don't agree have them corrected. But they need but small correction. They are both good chronometers—sometimes those rescue ones are that way—and these two'll almost tick for tick for months together. Which is just what my wife wants; for every night, exactly at nine o'clock, she has the older children kneeling by their bedsides and saying a prayer for me. She prays with them. And I've got to where I say a prayer myself aboard the vessel at the same hour, if the weather'll allow. And there's where the chronometer comes into the story. You all know of the last bad gale out here on Georges. I mean the real bad one. Of course. Fourteen vessels and one hundred and sixty-five men lost that night. Every third man and vessel of the hand-lining fleet went down inside twenty-four hours. We were in that gale—this same vessel, and no particular praise to me or the crew—and a fine crew, too—that ourselves and vessel came out of it safe. And how was that? I'll tell you.

"A wicked night it was, and we trying to buck our way off the bank. Wind? Lord knows, maybe ninety or a hundred miles an hour 'twas blowing. Frightful—yes. Under a two-reefed fores'l we were, and that was plenty. Black as hell, and seas to your mast-head. All around us we could hear the calls of men in peril, with their voices, when sometimes they'd rise above the wind, like the cries of ghosts in the night. I was worried. I said a prayer. Suddenly comes a bolt of thunder and a flash of lightning, so bright and sudden as to blind us almost, and in the glare of it we saw the other two vessels. It was like seeing when you're being photographed in a flash-light group at night—the report and glare, and the other people being seen suddenly—and then darkness again, with a ringing in your ears, and you trying to keep your eyes from blinking after it. 'Twas that flash of light saved us. There were three vessels of us about to come together, and you know what happens to vessels that come together on Georges in a gale. They all go down and all hands with them. We saw them, just time to shift the wheel and to scrape by, the *Smuggler* to one side and the *Barmecides* the other. Man, but 'twas close!

"But more wonderful than the flash of lightning or our being saved and the two other vessels being lost—which they were—we could hear them grinding together and their calls in the dark—and, worst of it all, we couldn't help, and they went, God rest 'em! But the wonderful thing—just at the time of the flash, which we easily fixed by the cabin clock—old Bob there was to be relieved at the wheel on the hour, and the new man on watch had just looked at the clock, that same clock which I then as well as now kept to exact time with the chronometers, he'd just taken a peep and said, 'Less than a minute now,' and had drawn on his mitts and had one foot on the companionway steps there to go on deck, when the flash came. Well, ashore, as it happened, which it doesn't always, it was bad weather that same night, too, and my wife was feeling worried, but not worrying enough to make any fuss over, for she knew that it might be bad weather in Gloucester and good weather on Georges. The children were sitting around reading or playing—she was nursing the baby—when all at once she set the baby down and got the children together, she didn't know why, and all in a moment. 'Children,' she said, 'Anna, Jack, Tom, Irene—on your knees, quick! and pray for your father——"

"'Why, mamma, it's only eight o'clock, an hour to bedtime yet,' says Irene.

"'H'sh! your father's in danger—pray with me now!'

"And they repeated the prayers after her, and the chronometer tinkling eight bells as they prayed, little Irene turned her head as if to tell it to hush. It didn't seem right to her that even the striking of a clock should be allowed to disturb prayers."

The skipper drew the sensitive finger-tips slowly down over forehead, eyelids, cheeks, and jaw. "Eye-ah!" he sighed, and slipped feet out of slip-shods, and, after another pause, slipped suspenders from shoulder to waist, and went to the companionway, and there for a while stood, head above the house, for a whiff of the air, and presently returned and faced the passenger.

"And what do the wise ones make of that? My wife, remember, is not one of those that take in mysterious séances in darkened, smelly rooms. She's a healthy, lovable woman, with eight healthy, handsome children. Now what?"

"Well, there's psychic force, of course, and telepathy's admitted by some."

"By some, yes, but half doubting. And others?"

"Well, superstition."

"Superstition, that's it. What they don't understand, whatever's beyond their dull imaginations and meager souls—meager, I say, because the soul must be nourished too—whatever's beyond them they say bah! old superstitions! And why? Lord knows, unless it's because they can't explain it. Now there will always be the useful people whose mission it is to deal with the facts of the physical world—things you can measure with a bushel-basket or a tape, or weigh on a pair of platform scales. If only they would stick to what God meant them for!—or if the cold-blooded kind, deficient in intellect say, would try to explain, instead of destroy, the faith in so many things that make for the betterment of mankind. I remember when wireless telegraphy came in; before the days of wireless telegraphy, we had our scientists, and some that passed for such. You'll agree to that?"

"Surely. They were very active, too."

"Aye, and so are ants, though mostly by way of example, and they mustn't mistake their little sand-heaps for Himalayas. Well, suppose we say one hundred years ago, or fifty or sixty years ago, before the cable was laid, a man came to them and said, 'The other day I sent a message across the sea—from a point in this country I asked a question of a man in Europe, and got his answer.' What would they have said to that man? We all know what they'd have said. Well, suppose, again, that to-day a fine old lady, who has lived a full life, loved and married and borne her brood of children, and her children after her borne children, too, and some have lived and some have died—she has christened her quick and waked her dead, her own and her children's children—she's had great joys in her life, but she's had her full share of sorrows, and from out of her life has come much thought. And all her life she has been trying to get nearer her Creator. Well, she hears in the night the cry of a beloved—at the other side of the earth he may be. He is in danger, and she hears his cry, his prayer for rescue, his wail of despair. He is dying, and she hears his whispered hope for pardon, and she speaks of it with tears, actually choking with the thought of it. And what is said of it? 'She is an old woman,' they say—or most of us, at least, would say—

'she is an old woman—can't read or write, possibly. Dreams,' they'll say; 'don't mind her.' And soothe her as if she were a child. And so she is hushed, but something within her is still unsatisfied. And there it is: Marconi in Newfoundland tunes up his instrument to so many vibrations a second, and a man in Ireland, with his instrument—whatever 'tis called—tuned up to the same number of vibrations, gets his message. In their symbols they communicate, and thereby prove the truth of what so many of us would label superstition if the truth of it weren't forced upon us. Yet Marconi was only proving in the physical world what that saintly old woman was doing continually in the spiritual world. All her life she has lived in God. Why can't she, towards the end of it, have the eyes that see, the ears that hear, the divinations that us ordinary fleshly people never have. We know people that would as soon smell a cabbage as a rose, who see no purple in a summer sunset in the hills, who know no difference between the booming of a negro boy on a bass drum and the touch of a heaven-born musician on the violin. You talk to them, and you have to limit your speech. Live with them long enough, and we may come ourselves to have the same limited senses, to see nothing delightful in flowers, sunsets, music, poetry, or in any of the beautiful things in life, for we certainly can lose the finer senses by gross living. Look at the little child of good parents. He knows nothing of life—knows nothing of sin, nothing of virtue, by experience; but set him down in a mixed company, vicious and good mingled. He doesn't know why, he can't explain, the poor child, but he'll turn from the bad and run to the really good. And why is that? Isn't it the finer senses, tuned more nearly to the spirit of the Great Truth?

"And again, for your people who believe nothing until it is proved to them, and proved according to their own rule; for by proof they mean something *they* can understand, something that's within their grasp, never for a moment alive to the fact that their grasp on the great things may be pitiably weak. I've had that kind out on a trip with me, and I've seen them grow—actually grow to a bigger conception of things. All their lives they've been looking out of little windows on narrow streets, and suddenly they are brought out here and set face to face with one of the great works of the universe. On a black night I've seen them stand on the deck of this little vessel—not great big seven-hundred-foot ship, with her promenade rail sixty feet from the water; but on this little fisherman, where they have only to lean over the rail and trail their fingers in the ocean. And something comes to them. They don't know what it is. They are then inarticulate, like the child. Something, whatever it is, too big for them to understand. But they feel it, although they never stay long enough to grasp it quite, or to let it take full hold. If they only would stay longer! But, no, in a week, a fortnight, they're once more ashore, back to their little four-walled room they go again, back to their old limitations. For that little while I had them here they were different men, they were beginning to catch a glimmering of a scheme that upsets all their reasoning powers when they try to think it out. 'It is too much, too much,' I've heard them say. But back they go to their walled-in laboratories, and after a while recover sufficiently to preach with loud voices all the little truths again. And, mind you, I'm not deriding science—I'm only saying, why do they not come out in the open and enlarge their vision? A man of the hills and the prairies, they tell me, rarely doubts. And the real men of the sea, this I know myself, are rarely sceptics; and so to them nothing is beyond belief."

The last straggler sank to sleep below, and the passenger sought the deck, where only old Bob was; and he, a sculptured figure against the fore-rigging, might have been asleep, too. So still he stood that the passenger was in doubt until he reached his side and saw that the steady eyes were really open.

"A grand night, Bob!"

"Aye, lad, grand—and solemn."

"That's it—solemn. Something like the night that Eb Stone was struck down, the skipper was saying a while ago."

"Something like that, but"—his slow eyes roamed sky and sea—"but stiller that night."

"Stiller? Than this? Then the elements themselves must have been asleep, Bob?"

"And why not? Why not to sleep, lad?"

"Sleep?"

"Aye, sleep."

"And dream, too, Bob?"

"Aye, lad, why not? To sleep and dream o' God?"

Why not? The passenger looked above and about. A notable night, not alone for the overpowering beauty, but for the amazing quiet of sea and sky. The passenger's thoughts came back to that other night of the *Didymus*.

Wasn't it possible that a knife was lying around deck, after all? And with it couldn't Eb have cut the line and let it slip overboard then? If not that, what sort of a creature—what manner of a countenance did it bear that the strong man was stricken dead at sight of it?

What was it? Was it—— A hundred hypotheses took shape in the passenger's brain. But, no, for thirty years the fleet had passed up that question, and in the fleet were those who dwelt ever on the brink of the Great Crossing, and who dwelt there had thoughts beyond the measure of the roof-bound peoples.

# XVIII

## FAIR WISHES

A GREAT one, my Uncle John Larkin, for the reading of books; of history and biography, of great saints and wicked sinners, of high and lordly and sometimes very foolish rulers; of books of poetry and fairy tales.

Master of the *Crusader* out of Gloucester he was, and under the cabin bulkhead lamp of a quiet night to sea he would read his books to himself, the sleeping men it might be in the bunks around him; or if it would come a day too rough to fish, then would he read to them aloud.

"A man doing a great deed, even if swollen with the pride of doing it, should have all the honor due the deed"—'twas so he read out one stormy day on the Western banks, the listening men on the lockers about him.

"True enough!" said two or three together, so no more than to let their skipper know that they were heeding his every word.

"True enough, yes!" agreed my uncle. "But what of the honor due a man who does a great deed but knows not that it is a great deed, and so takes no credit for it—what of that man?" looking around among them to see who might have a word to say to that.

"A damn fool, I say, to do a thing and take no credit for it!"

To which John Larkin said: "Small need to ask who said that. No fear, Henry Carson, you won't take credit for anything you ever do."

"If it's a thing to take credit for," said a jibing voice from someone on the lockers. And it was a harsh thing to say of a shipmate; but it was so said, and only open laughter rolled around the lockers after it.

"Hush, hush!" said John; and taking notice of one and another, his searching eyes met the shining ones of Dannie Bergin's, and to Dannie he said: "What do you say, Dannie, of a man who does a great deed, but making so little of it as to impress on all beholders that it is a deed for any man to attempt on any day whatever—what of that, Dannie?"

"What would I know of great deeds?" replied Dannie. "And I would rather be hearing tales of fairies and gold wish rings if you don't mind, Captain John."

"Ho! your old grandmother, I'll bet you, believed in fairies, Dannie?"

"Fairies? Oh, indeed! And my mother in wishes. 'Make three wishes, Dannie, dear,' said my mother to me when I was a boy. 'And I'm telling you now that God will grant them. But they must be fair wishes. They must come from your heart; and you must wish harm to no man, woman or child, or dishonor to the good name of God as you make them.'"

"And did you wish?"

"I did. I made three fair wishes."

"And is it a secret, Dannie, what your wishes were?"

"No, no great secret. Some day, Captain John, I will maybe tell them to you." He blushed a little as he said that.

Next morning the sea moderated sufficiently to be fishing again, and John Larkin was standing to the wheel of the vessel, jogging her in and out, and watching sharply the doings of his string of dories in the rising sea. Down they would go into the hollows wherever we looked, and stay there so long that again and again I had fear they were never coming up again; but this was my uncle's twenty-fifth year at the bank fishing, and he had long ago learned what I was already learning on this my first boy's trip to the Banks, that a dory can roll high and roll low and live many a long day after, if only the oar be kept heedfully in the becket, and the man standing by that oar be quick and fearless to act.

"But of the fearlessness of Henry Carson I've always had my doubts," said my uncle, like one talking to himself; and yet in the same breath bidding me to keep a special lookout for the dory, in which were Carson and Dannie Bergin; and by and by as I watched I saw a sea roll up and toss that dory; and seeing it I cried aloud, whereat my uncle rolled down the wheel of the vessel, shouting at the same time to the cook to hurry on deck and stand by. And I drew away the jumbo, and the cook was on deck in time to ease off the main sheet as the vessel wore around, and we three watching saw one of the capsized men climbing up on the bottom of the dory. Of the other there was no sign, for so long a time that we gave him up for lost; but even as we were so giving him up he came shooting stiff and straight from up out of the sea; and almost on the spot where he came up was a thwart from the capsized dory, and we saw him seize on the thwart, and without waste of time set it under his arms and there lie, a weary outspread man on the water.

Dannie Bergin that was, and what had happened to him was this: When the dory capsized, the heavy hooks and lines of the halibut gear were borne away and deep under by the fast running tide, and Dannie was caught by the hooked gear and borne down and under with it. How deep he went he never knew, but deep enough to feel his head ringing with the pressure of deep water, that he knew. And also he knew, when upwards he tried to kick his way, that more than the weight of his boots and clothes was holding him so deep under; and feeling around to find what it might be his hand met with a halibut hook buried to the end of the shank in the back of one thigh. Now a man could place a twenty-five cent piece almost in the bight of the hook the fresh halibuters employed in the killing of the big broad-backed halibut of those days, and to that hook was a barb almost big enough—as fishermen say—to hold a dory to anchor. It was a harsh thing for a man to do to himself, but it had to be done. Dannie took three turns of the stout ganging around his hand and—cr-r-rk—he tore the heavy hook with one stroke from his thigh. It was then he went shooting up to the top of the sea and in the clear air to his waist above that; and splashing down into the sea again he almost fell across the drifting thwart from the dory; and weighted down as he was with great redjacks, oilskins and heavy inner clothing soaked in water, that drifting thwart was a pleasant sight to him. And to that he was now clinging in the hope that the vessel would reach him ere his strength gave out.

All this time my uncle had been heading the vessel for the capsized dory. “Hold out one minute more and we will be with you!” he shouted to Henry Carson atop of the dory. And he shouted encouragement also to Dannie as he lay clinging to the thwart. Dannie made no move—he was too weary—but Carson raised one hand to show he understood; and almost as he so raised his hand a sea rolled up and swept him off the dory and close to where Dannie lay, and as it did we heard Carson, clear to the vessel, calling “Dannie, Dannie, I can’t swim!”

And as Carson so called we saw Dannie raise his weary head and look toward Carson; and we saw him then—with no further delay than to so raise his head—saw him throw the thwart to Carson. And we saw Carson draw it toward his own self and place it under his armpits and so lie safe while Dannie—well, Dannie could not swim a stroke at all, which left nothing for him but to sink under the sea.

"God in Heaven, there's a man to keep your Holy eye on!" the cook and myself both heard my uncle say, we all three at the same time watching out to see would Dannie come up. But all the sign we had of him was a sou'wester drifting toward the vessel. The cook paid no special attention to it nor did I; but my uncle had a mind that never wearied of puzzling things out. He studied the sou'wester; all at once he cried out: "There's more than air under that sou'wester; heave the main sheet after me!" And with that jumped over the side. The cook hove over the main sheet, and when my uncle came above water with the sou'wester, Dannie was under the sou'wester; and so he had but to reach out and take hold of the main sheet, and with the cook's and my help to hoist Dannie and then my uncle aboard. A moment later we hauled Carson aboard; and no bodily harm came to either for what they had been through, except that all the salve in the medicine chest was hardly enough to dress Dannie's torn thigh.

It was while he was fixing up his torn leg that my uncle said: "Was it one of your three wishes, Dannie, to be a great hero?"

Dannie stared at him: "The like of me a hero, Captain John!" Then he laughed. "I didn't see you were joking. No, no hero! I maybe made some foolish wishes but never one foolish as that, Captain John."

Which was all well enough for Dannie to say, but when we were once more home in Gloucester, my uncle could never stop telling to whoever had time to listen of the capsizing of the dory and the high part played in it by Dannie Bergin. Of course he told Mr. Duncan, who was the outfitter as well as half owner with himself of the vessel; and Mr. Duncan, out of pride that a man sailing for him should do so great a thing, came from the inner office to where in the store outside the men were sitting around waiting for their share of the trip, and complimented Dannie. And to Carson he said: "And of course no one can appreciate what Bergin did as you who were his dory-mate!"

"I never meant that he should give me that thwart," said Carson.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Mr. Duncan.

"I mean that it was never in my thought to allow Dan Bergin to give his life to save mine. I did not know he could not swim," added Carson.

"A queer thing," said my uncle, "you, his dory-mate, not knowing what everyone in the vessel knew, that Dannie couldn't swim!"

All hands were laughing sidewise at Carson; all but Dannie Bergin. He stood up, saying: "I am Henry's dory-mate. And who should he call on if not me, his dory-mate? And swim or no swim, what does it matter now, Captain John, except that thanks to God and your quick ways and the cook's—and young Johnnie there, too, doing his full boy's share—we are both of us now alive?"

The crew took their shares, and passed out of the store; all but Carson. My uncle held him up, saying: "Henry Carson, Dannie is too good a man to have to be trusting his life to you in a dory. You will take your bag ashore, and I will let all men think you went of your free will."

"Oh, I was going to anyway—next trip if not this. I can do better than by risking my life fishing. It is no life for a man with brains in his head."

"And no courage in his heart," said my uncle, scowling.

Carson went out; and Mr. Duncan, looking after him, said: "A big-feeling one, isn't he, Captain John?"

"Big-feeling and self-loving, yes," said my uncle, "playing the great man with such of the crew as he can, and above all, with Dannie. And Dannie that honest himself he can see evil in no man; and that loyal and humble-minded he would remove himself from the light of the sun itself before he would allow so much as his shadow to be laid across a shipmate's course. But the other? If I know men, for the rest of his life Henry Carson will be hating Dannie Bergin for showing himself so much the better man that day on the Banks."

"No doubt," said Mr. Duncan. "And I liked young Bergin's looks. It is the like of him who has placed the name of our Gloucester fishermen so high on the scrolls of time."

"It is so. I read poetry, Alec Duncan, but Dannie Bergin lives it. And if to see life beautifully is to be a poet, as I may have somewhere read, then he is a poet every day of his life, but—thank God—having no notion he is such."

"A good fisherman, is he?"

"It would be too wonderful if he knew more than he does of fishing at his age. And sail a vessel! Before I die I want to make one passage in a good breeze of wind with Dannie Bergin as master. He is one who will drive her, and play like a laughing boy the while—drive her till all is blue."

"We will have to get him a vessel some day soon, and—but wait a bit, Captain John—look—there's the girl they call Bess!"

Mr. Duncan was pointing to where, in the window of a store across the side street, a handsome, yellow-haired girl was sewing oilskins. "She's come there lately and not a loose-footed young trawler but what comes shaking up into the wind if she but looks out on him as he sails by."

"I hope they don't frighten her."

"All the men in the world wouldn't frighten her. The more men the better pleased she is, though to my mind it is your Dannie Bergin or Carson—and Bergin rather than Carson—she is setting her trawl for."

"Baiting to hook all kinds will never hook Dannie. And—but there's Carson now!"

Carson stopped in front of the window. The girl looked out, saw him, and without delay dropped her sewing and came out onto the steps of the store. They began to talk, low enough at first, but presently in louder tones. It was a pleasant day in spring and the side window of Mr. Duncan's store was open, and the girl especially seemed to care little who might hear what she might have to say.

"Yes, I'm standing here and I'm telling you I will marry him if I feel like it," we heard her say.

"Go ahead—marry him!" shouted Carson, moving off, "and I hope he kills you or you kill him some time."

"And I hope you go to sea and get lost."

"That's a wish you'll never get, for I'm going to sea no more," called back Carson.

"Take great care o' yourself, then, for you won't find many Dannie Bergins to be throwin' you a dory's thwart ashore," she yelled after him.

"I'll bet he's wishing he kept his mouth shut now," whispered Mr. Duncan.

"Tuh—'twill be more than words will discompose him"—This from my uncle.

Carson stopped to throw back: "Curses and kisses—they always did lie close together with you, Bess," and moved off again.

"So!" She ran half a dozen steps toward him. "So? Come back and try for the kisses now, and see how many you get!"

Carson did not come back; and she went indoors.

"What a barge!" said my uncle.

"But a straightforward one," said Mr. Duncan.

"Tuh! Pleased enough I'll be to see Dannie clear of the like of her—and Carson, too."

My uncle took aboard his stores and ice and put to sea, letting me go with him again; and we were home again and I was walking up from the wharf with my uncle and Dannie Bergin when Henry Carson came up from behind, and without so much as a "Hi!" or "Hello!" or "How are you?"—"Did you hear Bess is married?" said Carson to Dannie.

It was like a vessel taking a heavy sea—young as I was I could see that—the way Dannie fetched up. Then steadily enough he said: "Who is the man?"

"Oh, you don't know him? His name is Meers, and she only met him a few weeks ago."

"Well, a few minutes, let alone a few weeks, Henry, is time enough to fall in love, they say!"

"Love! It's his money!"

"No, no, Henry, Bess wouldn't marry for that alone! And good luck to them both!"

Carson scowled, and Dannie went on: "Now that she's married we won't be seeing her any more, I suppose."

"I'll be seeing her," said Carson, and went off almost running.

My uncle took a long look at Dannie, and then led the way to where on a hill a little park overlooks the harbor of Gloucester. For want of further orders I held to their wake. My uncle sat down on a bench, motioning Dannie to sit beside him. And they sat there with neither one speaking for a long time, and then it was Dannie who said: "My first fair wish, Captain John, was that I might some day be loved by the woman that I did love. But like a gull skirling into a bank o' fog that wish is now gone."

"The world is full of wishes for you yet, Dannie. Look there!" My uncle stood up, and as if Dannie were a little boy he gave him his hand to stand up; and Dannie stood up beside him.

"Look there, Dannie," my uncle was pointing at the vessels to anchor in the stream. "A fine vessel to go master of—what of that, Dannie?" From the vessels to anchor he pointed out past the Cape, saying: "And what of the billowy sea and the stars that you used to tell me in the night watches were too wonderful for thought?"

And by and by, looking from the sea to the sky and back again, Dannie said: "You are right, Captain John. It is a wonderful hope, a fine vessel; and the rolling, white-breasted sea is beautiful beyond words; and the swinging, shiny stars enough to take all a man's mind sometimes."

The day came when Dannie got his vessel; and he was grateful and proud. "I know to what I owe it, Mr. Duncan—to the good words of Captain John and your good heart. And it is like a fair dream to me that I shall soon be sailing the sea and in God's grace—home again to Gloucester the master of my own vessel. I would like to sail to-day, for to sea is where a vessel should be when gear and stores are aboard and her crew on the string piece waiting, but an easterly gale is blowing outside, and to be beating to sea against a heavy gale is no kindness to the crew or vessel. It would be but to wear them out for a small headway in the beginning of a trip."

If he had but sailed to sea that day!

That evening Mrs. Meers, she being the bold, yellow-haired Bess of earlier days, left her husband reading the evening paper, he being not much of a going out man, while she went with a woman friend to the picture theater. After the theater she was letting herself into her house when the police sprang up from out of the dark about her to say that someone had telephoned of a passerby seeing murder done in a lighted room in her house. So she let the police in quietly, and there was her husband stretched out on the floor, and Captain Dannie Bergin sitting without a word in a chair beside him.

He had been choked to death.

No one who knew Dannie well but said one thing: "Dannie Bergin never killed Meers."

But there were those who said: "If he didn't who did? And what was he doing there—a man said to be courting the wife before she married Meers?"

To which Dannie only said: "What a queer way of showing my liking for a woman—to kill the man she preferred to me!"

My uncle and Mr. Duncan came to him. "You never killed that man, Dannie!"

"No, Captain John, I did not!"

"Then what brought you there?" asked Mr. Duncan.

"I could answer you that, Mr. Duncan, but my answer would cast suspicion on where no suspicion should rest."

"Has Henry Carson anything to do with that answer?" said my uncle.

And Dannie said: "Captain John, I know you do not like Henry—you never did like him—but from out of the deep friendship I bear you, I ask you now not to bring into this the name of a man who was no more in my mind than were you or Mr. Duncan when I went to that house."

He stood his trial. And to the charge of murder he said: "I did not kill that poor man! Why should I—a poor man that I never felt harm for? I can only say that I came in and found him dead." That was all; he did not even try to explain how he happened to be there.

Mr. Duncan's lawyer, for the defense, could only put in the known good record of the accused man's life, and the manner and appearance of the man himself. "There he stands! Look at him, gentlemen of the jury! Does he look like a foul murderer?"

The belief of some of the jury as we learned it long after was that he did not kill the man, but that he knew who did and was too loyal to tell. He was shielding the wife, some thought; while there were others who said no; no man would carry his loyalty that far. It was a jury divided as to his guilt; but the charge of the judge as to the evidence was not to be set aside. They found him guilty of murder in the second degree only.

"For life," was the penalty for a murder in the second degree, and for life the judge gave him. It was a terrible day, that.

After a decent interval John Larkin and Mr. Duncan began to see about having him pardoned. Governor after governor they worked on with but small headway showing, when—it was in the fourteenth year of his sentence and they had given up hope for that year—suddenly he was let out.

He came straight to my uncle in Gloucester, and almost his first words were: "Captain John, have you a chance in your vessel for me?"

"Dannie, for as long as I am master of a vessel there will be a chance for you," said my uncle. "But you'd better see Mr. Duncan first, I think."

He went to Mr. Duncan.

"Captain Bergin," said Mr. Duncan, "with me you can begin where you left off fourteen years ago. A vessel of mine was waiting for you then. A vessel of mine you can have now."

Fourteen years of confinement had not taken all the old spring from Dannie's step; he was still a straight, strong man to look at, but he had to sit down with weakness when Mr. Duncan said that to him, in the way he did.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Duncan,"—he was wiping the tears from his eyes—"but fourteen years in prison—it is a long time, and gentle words and kind acts were not our daily fare there."

He set out to ship a crew; and then he learned that fourteen years is a long time to be away. Old shipmates were lost or scattered and the men who came to take their places from outside were strange to him. They inquired who was this man looking for a crew for the new Duncan vessel; and it was then he learned what it is to bear an evil name. Was it of any brave deed of his they were told then? No, no. No real gossip prefers to roll his tongue around tales of brave deeds. Who was this Bergin? Who but the man who had been tried and found guilty before a fair court and served fourteen years in jail for killing the husband of a woman that he had once himself been fond of.

The murderer! The black murderer! What luck could come to a vessel with that kind for a master? No luck, no, no. And back up the wharf they would go with their bags.

The old glow had come back to Dannie's eyes, but now it left them again and the new color faded from his cheeks. His step grew stiffer and slower. He came to Mr. Duncan's office, saying:

"It was a hard life I lived for fourteen years. We would be shut in between the high stone walls of the prison yard by day; and between the low steel walls of a prison cell by night. To see the sky by day we would have to throw our heads back onto our shoulders almost; while for the stars—the big and little stars that men walking the deck in the night watches do grow so fond of out to sea—all ever I saw of them would be at the close of a winter's day when the dark would come early, and then it would be but a quick side look at a lone one or two of them shining through the barred windows as past them we marched on our way to be locked in our cells for the night.

"Sea and sky—they are almost like food and drink to a man who has been born to live between them; but for fourteen years such was all I saw of any sky; and of the sea—never a sight at all. Hard it was; and yet no more than a man might expect in such quarters and so to be guarded against; but to return to the port where I was born and out of which for all my free days I sailed—to come back to there and find fishermen—fishermen, I say, who believe me guilty of killing a poor man that never harmed me—God in Heaven, but how is a man to guard against that!"

We could find no words to say to him. After a time he went on to say:

"Three fair wishes I once made, but fair wishes are no more for me than high shining stars for prison cells. My first fair wish flew from me long ago—as you, Captain John, well know. My second dropped from me this day like a deep-sea lead in shoal water. For my third fair wish—well—I am going from here to some place where no stranger will know from whence I came, and no friend quick to find me, and there I will live out my poor life and there will I die and be buried."

No words of ours could change him; whereupon my uncle said to him: "Dannie, here is Mr. Duncan, and here is myself, two old true friends of yours, and here is young Johnnie that has now his own wife and his own home, and his own vessel to go master of. Will you before you go tell us three what brought you into that house that night?"

"True friends ye three be," said Dannie after a silence—"with heartening words and doings for me always. But a woman alone in the world is a creature for all men to guard. Say to me now that no harm will come to the poor woman who suffered beyond all others for that night's work—and I will tell you how I came to be in that room with that dead man."

We passed our word, and he told us, and went then on his own lonesome way.

Two days after he had gone I was taking stores aboard my vessel, my uncle standing beside me, when we heard a woman's voice inquiring for Captain John Larkin.

It was Mrs. Meers. It was my first good look at her in fourteen years, but I knew her. Her free ways were gone from her, and much of the wild woman look, but not so great a change in her as I thought to find. She still looked like one who might disturb the quiet of honest men if she so cared.

She came to where we stood, and to my uncle she said:

"Captain John Larkin, I am Mrs. Meers."

"I know; I know."

"Where has Dannie Bergin gone?"

"Why should I tell you where—but how do you know he is gone?"

She was no woman to be easily upset. She studied him for several seconds before she said: "Captain Larkin, all Gloucester says you are a just man. If you are just to me in your manner then you must think me a wicked, wicked woman. However, every morning since coming back Dannie passed my house on his way to the wharf here. And every noon coming and going to his lunch he passed twice again. And every evening returning to his lodging, he passed once again. And he never once passed that he did not look up at my windows."

"Kept a close watch, didn't you?"

"I did, yes. From behind my window curtains I watched him, if you want to know. But I did not come here to match my temper against yours. For two days now Dannie has not passed, and by that I know he must be gone away. Tell me, Captain John, where has he gone?"

"Tell you where—tell me, you, where is Henry Carson all these years?"

"I was not talking of Henry Carson!"

"No, but I am. Was it you or Carson wrote that note to Dannie that night?"

My uncle had shaggy brows and deep-set eyes; his eyes when he got angry were like twin lights blazing out from under a bushy cliff. They were blazing out now. But she never looked away from them.

"Note? What note? And what night?"

"What note?" she said again; and he could not, for all his fierce eyes, look her down.

"Perhaps I've been wronging you, Mrs. Meers. Let us go to Mr. Duncan's office."

Mr. Duncan was in his office and with him to attest its accuracy my uncle began to retell Dannie Bergin's story.

"Mrs. Meers, on the night your husband was murdered Dannie Bergin was in his room making ready to turn in for the night when he heard a sound as of a pebble thrown against his window. He raised the shade and looked out through the glass, but it was a black night, if you will remember, with a heavy rain falling and an easterly gale blowing, and he could see nothing. 'That's queer," he thought, and was about to lower the shade again when crashing through the glass and onto the floor came an envelope wrapped around a piece of iron. And inside the envelope was a note which read: 'My life is threatened. Come to my house at once. The back door will be left open. Hurry—hurry!' It was signed 'Bess.'"

My uncle paused.

"Yes?" said Mrs. Meers.

"You know the rest, Mrs. Meers."

"I know that we found him in my house, and only that. What became of the note, Captain John?"

"It is a good question," said my uncle; and I, who knew him, could see how respect for her was mounting high in him. "A good question. As Dannie ran out of the door of his house, he felt the note still between his fingers. He was about to put it in his pocket, but the thought came to him that such a note, signed familiarly by a young married woman to a young man who had once courted her, would do her no good if it was ever found. And so—to use his own words, Mrs. Meers—he tore it into a hundred little pieces, that the black wings of the night might bear them to where no evil eye would ever see them. And that was Dannie Bergin, ma'am, thinking always of someone else."

"And I wondering all the time what brought him to do it!"

"If you were so wondering," snapped my uncle at her, "then why in God's name didn't you go and ask him that?"

"I was going to see him, but Henry Carson met me. 'Are you losing your wits,' he said, 'going to visit a man who killed your husband?'

"'But I want to see him; to hear from his own lips that he killed him before I will believe it,' I said.

"'If he did not kill him why of course he will say so before the Court and so clear himself,' Carson said. 'But you go to see him now, you that he once courted, and what will people make of it? They will say that there was an understanding between you and him—what else? And that now the two of you are talking over the defense. And once they get thinking that he is ruined.'

"And so I did not go to see him. A cunning man, I see now, to talk to me so at that time."

"Did Carson come to see you before the murder, Mrs. Meers?" asked Mr. Duncan.

"He telephoned me often, and once when my husband was away he came to see me. He could never get it out of his head that I was wild for him, and this day he was in one of his rages, wanting me to run off with him."

"'Why should I run away with you?' I said.

"'Why should you waste your youth with that poor sickly man, your husband?' was his answer.

"'Knowing me for what I was,' I said, 'he took me and gave me a good home, and it will take more than your fine opinion of yourself to make me forget that.'

"'No woman forgets the love of her youth—you will come to me yet,' he said in leaving me that day. And after he left Gloucester, which he did the day after the trial, he took to writing me letters. Even within a few weeks I had a letter from him. Here it is, and here is one thing he wrote in it"; and she read:

"'I am a man who can wait a lifetime. It is only your pride which holds you from coming to me. And you will come to me yet.'"

She stood up. "And I am going to him. He is a cunning man, and I only a dull woman in many ways. But some things I know as no man can know them. And I will go to him now."

"The world will talk of you!" said Mr. Duncan.

"Let the world talk. I went one day to Boston and bared all the shame of my young woman's life to the Governor of the State—to get Dannie Bergin out of prison. I did that. The years and years I had been thinking of him! And what I told a strange man I will tell the talking world if need be—for the happiness of Dannie Bergin. I will find Henry Carson and—but I am talking, not doing."

She went, and for a month, two months, three months, six months—a whole year, we waited. But no word came from her.

"She went a lone woman into a big world," said Mr. Duncan, "a woman still young and handsome enough to be tempting to men, and more tempting to Henry Carson than to most, and he is a shrewd, hard man."

"But she is no longer a wanton girl, and a woman honest and loving a man like Dannie—we'll give her yet more time," said my uncle.

It was two years since Mrs. Meers had gone from us. I was in from the sea—in my own home now. My wife was upstairs putting the baby to sleep. My uncle who had given up the fishing was playing with the older children when the bell rang. It was Mrs. Meers who walked in.

I placed a chair for her and my uncle said: "You have sailed a long course, Mrs. Meers, since we saw you."

"Yes, Captain John, a long course I have sailed, with more head winds than fair, more tacking and filling than running free, since last I saw you. And many cities and more than one strange country did the changing wake of Henry Carson take me to. But at last we moored together; and it was as if by chance we met."

"'And meeting you so, Bess, in this strange place, begets a new and powerful intimacy.' Such were his first words, and he by this time a most important person. We talked for hours together and we met again. And again. And there were times in those earlier meetings when I believe I could have had the truth out of him; but I had to take care always that he did not speak too soon. When he revealed his evil soul to me, I did not wish his words to be wasted."

"However—but have you a glass of water, Johnnie?" To me that was, and I offered her something more heartening. But only water she wanted. And I brought her a goblet of it; and she gulped it in one mouthful almost and went on: "Last night we met in Boston and:

"'It is a long time, Bess, but you've come to me at last. Own up to it now, you came to me at last'—such was the turn his talk took last night."

"'Yes,' I said, 'I have come to you at last.'

"We talked on, and again he wished me to go off with him.

"'Have you no shame for me?' I said. 'You are a well known man. Even in this hotel may be people who might be curious to know who I am. And then out would come the old story, and away would go all good opinion of me.'

"He pleaded and pleaded, and at last I said: 'Come to-morrow and lunch with me where we can speak your fill of other days with no curious eyes or ears that I would fear to hear and see. There will be something to eat and drink, and I will send the maid away.'

"And he came to my apartment, and there was plenty to eat and drink, and I sent the maid away.

"And he was for carrying me by storm. But I was in no temper for him to carry me by storm, and by and by he said:

"'Bess, there is something solemn about you to-day.'

"'What woman would not be solemn as she crowds her pride underfoot?' I said by way of answer. But it was a warning to me—the man's senses had not left him altogether, and from then on there was no forgetting by me of the ways that it was once my pastime to practice with foolish men. And lying there —a poor, weak woman in the hollow of his arm as no doubt he thought—he said: 'What is it brings a woman to the man she loves at last?'

"'What woman knows,' I said, 'and what woman cares, so that it is to the one of her liking she comes?'

"'You married Meers to spite me, didn't you? Don't deny it—didn't you?' he says again. And listening to him to myself I said: 'The foolish woman, including yourself, who thinks such a man could love you. For every ounce of passion for you there is a pound of vanity of himself. Vanity, vanity—it is the core of his heart!'

"To myself that was. To him I said: 'How foolish to deny what you know so well! And how foolish, too, to deny to you who knows it so well of the wildness that runs sometimes in woman's blood for the love of some man. It would make her commit murder almost.'

"'And a man commit murder, too,' he said.

"'Only one man ever I knew would go that far for me,' I said.

"'Dan Bergin?'

"'Who else?'

"'Bergin never had the spunk to kill a man!' he shouted in a passion.

"'A great passion and a great loyalty were his,' I said to that. 'He spent fourteen years in jail for the love of me.'

"'You talk big, but how do you know Bergin killed your husband?'

"'How do I know? How did the police know? Didn't they find him standing over the dead body?' So I spoke to him steadily enough, but my leaping heart was saying: 'It is one of your very own I am fighting for—be with me now, dear God!'

"'I know where they found him,' said Henry Carson, and half a smile and half a sneer he had for me. 'But how do you know he killed Meers?'

"'You will never let anyone else be right, will you? If he didn't kill him what brought him there?'

"'*I* brought him there!' It was like a bugle blast—the voice of him when he said it.

"'You brought him there! You!' I laughed as loud as I knew how at him, though to have the strength that one time was Dannie Bergin's and take him by the throat and choke from him the whole story in one breath would suit me better. 'You're boasting now, Henry,' I said. 'What power had you over Dannie Bergin that you could make him kill a man?'"

"'*He* kill him? *I* killed him!'

"It was Henry Carson killed him, Henry Carson killed him! The words were singing in my head, and I could hear the voice of a strange woman laughing, even while I was forcing my fingers gripped-like to my side so they wouldn't be leaping to his throat. And the laugh I tried to repeat, though I could not do it so strangely, and with what I hoped to God was a light smile to look at, I said 'I've known men before you, Henry, to confess to things they never did for no greater reason than to have some girl think them more than ordinary.'

"'I tell you I killed Meers,' he cried out. 'I stole in that night hoping to find you alone, but instead of finding you I stumbled on to your husband. We had words and I choked him to death before I was through. Now, what do you say?'

"'A fine story,' I said, 'but how was it Dannie Bergin was there and not you when the police came?'

"'I will tell you how,' he said. 'Meers was dead. I had to throw suspicion from myself, and on to someone else. I knew the foolish side of Dan Bergin for you and the sure way to close his foolish mouth.'

"'But how, how, how?' I said.

"'How? I wrote a note to him, signing your name, knowing he had never a line of writing from you—no more than had I then—in all his life, and I hove it through his window and when I saw Bergin on his way I telephoned the police.

"'It was a great thought, Bess, to drag Bergin into it, and so kill the two birds with one stone,' he said proudly. 'But one time I thought you did like him. But you never forgot me, did you, Bess?'

"And I said: 'No, I never forgot you; and it will be a long day before I will forget you. Only one thing will I remember longer than you.'

"'What is that?' he said.

"'The great heart of Dannie Bergin,' I said. 'I may forget that you were all that was evil, but never Dannie, who was all bravery and goodness.'

"His fingers by then were at my throat, but I was no weak, half-sickly man taken by surprise. I threw him from me, and the three men in hiding came from out of the closet, and took him off to jail.

"'Twas hardly two hours ago I left him. The papers will no doubt be having the full story of it and no doubt again all who read it will have some free thoughts of me after it. But let people say what they will—it is done!"

She stood up. "It is done, and a weary woman the doing of it has left me—I must go now to my own home. But before I go, I want you to promise me, Captain John, that the word will be passed to Dannie and no waste of time in passing it."

"If need be, I will sail the sea that I thought to sail no more, to pass the word to him," said my uncle.

To which I said: "There is a place for age and wisdom, Uncle John; but that place is not to the wheel of a driving vessel and the heart of winter on her." To her I said, "I will take the word to Dannie Bergin, Mrs. Meers, and lose no time in the taking."

There was a word between my uncle and Mr. Duncan, and next day I sailed in the new vessel which lay to Duncan's wharf, a vessel so sweet of line and powerfully sparred that crowds of fishermen had been coming down for days to see and talk about her.

The *Messenger* was her name, and out past Eastern Point and through the tide rips of Fundy, and all the way to a rough north coast and across a big bay on that north coast I drove her. And into the northerly arm of that bay for as far as the draft of the vessel would allow I sailed her.

It was my uncle's old friend Ben Morton of the Bay who then took me up the North Arm in his little jack, the *Sister Sue,* to where strangers seldom found the way, to where was no post or telegraph, to where children were born and reared and had children born to them again, without ever knowing a doctor, to where men had to spend a full day to go to and from the little mission church when they went to worship God.

"But a well man you will not find him," said Ben. "For four days an' four nights, with not sleep enough to take the smallest measure of, he was haulin' th' herrin' from the nets, an' freezin' they on the scaffolds, an' loadin' they into the *Sister Sue* to bring they into the big bay. An' so it was always with him—a lovely, fine nature, but a man to take no care o' self.

"He will be in there," said Ben, pointing by and by to a wind-blown little shack; and there he was, in a low-set bunk in the wind-blown shack. His hair was gray, his face graved deep, and the hand that lay on the coverlet was very thin.

He looked up at me, as I bent over him. "Captain John—no, no, young John, it is! What brings you here, Johnnie boy?"

"Judgment has fallen on the wicked. The man who killed Meers awaits his punishment. And now you may come home, Dannie, and stand with head no longer bowed before doubting men," I said.

"It is a great word you bring me, Johnnie, a great word after all the hard years, and like the great heart that is in all your people to come all this rough way to bring it."

Back through the holes and shoals of the North Arm we went in Ben Morton's *Sister Sue* and so aboard the *Messenger*. And at the mouth of the North Arm I took fifteen hundred barrels of frozen herring aboard; and as all men know, frozen herring makes fine lively ballast.

Then I brought up the big cabin chair and lashed it to the weather bit aft; and lashed Dannie into the chair; and Dannie studied her sweet lines and her powerful spars and said:

"A wonderful vessel to look at. Does she behave as well as she looks, Johnnie?"

"Ask Ben Morton how she crossed the Bay this day, and as he tells you, so will I tell you she came all the long course from Gloucester, making no more of the drive of the winter's gale than if it was a summer breeze sighing through some noble lady's garden."

"It is almost like the voice of your uncle talking, Johnnie. A wonderful feeling it must be, Johnnie, to be master of the like of her!"

"Master of her I am not, Dannie. Proud would I be to sail her—the finest vessel that ever I or any other man stood to the wheel of—back to Gloucester, but master of her I am not."

"And who is, Johnnie?"

"Who but one that never went master of a vessel before! Who but your own self, Dannie boy! And many a time when I have heard my uncle tell of you lashed to the wheel of the old *Crusader,* all loose water to her windward rail amidship and all solid water to above her wheel box aft, and no more sign of fear in you than a pleased little smile or a little low song to the roaring waters sliding past you, so many a time was it his dear wish to see you some day with a vessel of your own and see what you would make of her!"

"Master of this great, able new one! It is wonderful beyond belief, Johnnie. But if master I am, then we will break out her anchor and make sail, and put that whole great mainsail to her, and we will see what she will make of it across the big bay."

We broke out the anchor and we made all sail; and the *Messenger* began to clear a way for herself.

From the deck and sails of the moving vessel, Dannie's eyes moved to the waters and hills around them. "Cold and blowy, but clear enough it is, Johnnie, and a man needing no long glass to see the hills lying blue as blue water beyond the South Arm."

"But in the bay itself is no blue water, Dannie."

"No. All white water there, Johnnie. But see her now, the loose water already to her wind'ard combings when deeper down into it she drives her buried rail. And red and bright she will be showing her garboard planking to the watchers on the shore when about she comes and down she rolls for the beat to Spit End—eh, Johnnie boy?"

And almost to her keel the bright sun lit up her red-painted planking; and it lit up her white high-cut sails, and the water was running off her long, flat, new-varnished rails when leaping up from the white-crests they came, and the loose sea swashed up to Dannie's feet as he sat and watched from his chair to the windward bitt aft.

"From Herring Cove to Spit End within the hour against this hard gale! All men of this Bay know well the meaning of that!" he cried out. "And now since she has taken it abeam, and she has taken it for'ard, let us see can she take it aft, Johnnie boy. Quartering we will run her past where the wild squalls of Blow-me-Down like great steel knives are tearing the bay wide open, and then let us who are aboard her and let all the watchers in the Bay see what she will make of that."

Aft she took it, and quartering she ran past old Blow-me-Down; and her long boom went into the slings when down into it she drove, and her high peak went skying to the clouds when up from the white smother she lifted; and Dannie almost lifted from his chair to see her, and I had to give him the time by the cabin clock.

"From Spit End to South Cape in fifty minutes! Oh, the wonderful, fine vessel! For many a long winter's night to come the men of this Bay will be talking of her."

And so she cleared the Bay; and with tightened sheets, held the rough coast to the Straits; and a reach then across the Straits; and a looser sheet to Cape Sable; and breasting the Cape a longer sheet yet for the last leg home.

But by then he had to take to his bunk, and all that morning he lay with no word, and no move except for a little pressure of his right hand from time to time to his heart.

"You have a pain there, Dannie?" I asked.

"No great pain, Johnnie, but when I go it will be by that way, I think—and whsst! like that—quick as ever we could tack this vessel in a fresh breeze. What is she making?"

"Sixteen knots for the last ten hours."

"The noble vessel! and the wind over her quarter—the way all great sailing vessels do like it. And I am master of her!"

"You are master, Dannie, and a great pity she did not come to you sooner!"

"A pity—maybe so. And yet, Johnnie, a lucky man I should be saying I am, for not to every man does it come to be cleared of the charge of great evil and all men to know it this side of the grave."

"It is to no grave, Dannie boy, but home-bound we are."

"Home, of course, Johnnie. And it being so, and more wind should come—she being the vessel she is—will you drive her to the last, Johnnie, on her brave swift way to Gloucester?"

"I will drive her, Dannie, as your own self would wish it."

And I drove her. A solid, white lather it was for a deck's width to leeward of her; and it was a white roaring torrent rushing over her house; and her lee shrouds were flying like loose tassels in the high wind, and her windward stays were like iron bars against the strain of her tall spars.

"And the tall spars themselves?" asked Dannie, when I brought him the word of her behaving.

"Buckling like rolling hoops they are to the press of wind and canvas!" I said—this as the brown rocks of Cape Ann lifted out of the leaping surf ahead.

"The noble vessel! A pity to make her suffer so, but it won't be long now, Johnnie? This day, as I lay here, I had a dream, or it maybe was no dream, of a fog lying heavy on the sea. But the fog lifted, and I was in a noble vessel, with strong tides and strong winds bearing her swiftly on to a bright horizon. And above the horizon was a tall peak, and above the peak a golden steeple shining. And, Johnnie?"

"Yes, Dannie."

"Once I made three fair wishes, and two of them you know, but the third one, Johnnie, was that I be not lost at sea, but in safety to come home and to be buried at the last in the little graveyard where such of my people as were not lost at sea do lie buried before me. You and Captain John and Mr. Duncan maybe will see to that, Johnnie."

"We will see to it, Dannie."

"'Tis like your good heart, and it won't be long now, Johnnie."

It was not long. The flying *Messenger* was barely to anchor in Gloucester harbor when my uncle was aboard; and he sent for Bess; and to her when she came he said:

"A great soul is about to leave the earthly body that men call Dannie Bergin. Fear no more to show him the real heart of you for him."

She went below, and when he came to himself again she was leaning in from the locker beside his bunk and both her hands were around one of his.

"Bess! O Bess! Not you, Bess!"

"Yes, Dannie."

"O Bess! After all these years I have it to tell you. It was the sin of my life, Bess—my thought that you killed your husband. 'No knowing what great cause she had'—such was my weak excusing thought of you, when it should have been deep in my heart that you could do no such monstrous deed. And I suffered for it, as I should. It was my own mother who warned me long ago. 'To sin in thought is as much as sinning in deed, Dannie. Take care how even you doubt good men and women!' And I doubted you, Bess."

"To doubt me for that—and the greater thing you never doubted me for—it is a small matter and it is long past, Dannie."

"Is it so long, Bess? Why it is like yesterday that I saw you standing tall and beautiful in the sun of that bright morning, Bess. And the rosy color flooded to your kindling eyes as I looked at you. And your hair! One day to sea I saw the moon lift up over the edge of the eastern sea even as in the western quarter a golden sun was setting—a wonderful golden moon and golden sun—all the crew of the vessel, even Captain John himself so said. But more wonderful to me was the golden glory of your shining hair that first day I saw you. Tall and beautiful you were, but oh, above all your beauty was such a look from your eyes that to myself I said, 'There is one who could love a man beyond his power to understand.' But not a second look you gave me."

"Oh, Dannie, Dannie! A thousand looks did my heart have for you! For straight as the tall spar of a great vessel you stood before me that morning. And all the strength of the heaving sea was in your noble body. And all the wonder that ever men had told me of the deep, dark sea was in your eyes. And more than all of these was the courage, and the gentleness which flowed out from you. The leap of my heart was like a blow inside my bosom when you looked fair at me! 'There is a man who could die a thousand deaths to save one he loved from a moment's pain'—so I said to myself that day."

"You thought that, and yet you turned away, Bess?"

"The pure deep sea was in your eyes, not mine. I was not worthy, Dannie."

"Not worthy? Hush, Bess! It is the glory of good women, as Captain John could tell you in grander words than ever I knew, that they can never measure the height of their own goodness, nor the sinfulness of the poor creatures of men they do sometimes love. My own mother would say: 'God forgive me, sinner that I am!' and she like one straight from God. And so you bore me in mind that day, Bess?"

"I loved you that day, and will love you all the days till I die, Dannie."

"O Bess! And the weak creature I was that was never so near the fulfillment of every wish as when I thought no wish was left? Bess?"

"Yes, Dannie."

"My watch is all but over, and my strength is going from me. Hold me, Bess."

"I will hold you Dannie, till God Himself comes to take you from me."

And she held him, crooning as over a child, till God did come to take him away.

The prayers were said, the grave was sodded, the mourners were leaving. Said my uncle then:

"I will not say that Dannie's soul is looking proudly down on us, for pride could never be part of Dannie; but proud are we who knew him, that from far and wide strange men should come this day to do him reverence. And it is that quality of reverence for true men which bids the meanest of us to hope that while there is need on earth for it, goodness and bravery shall ever spring from the hearts and souls of honest men."

He turned to Mr. Duncan: "I read one time—'twas a man in high worldly station who said it—that a man doing a great deed, even if swollen with the pride of it, should have all the honor due that deed."

"And true enough, Captain John," said Mr. Duncan.

"True enough, yes, but should we not honor even more highly that man who does a great deed but who from the humility of his soul knows not that it is a great deed? Such men, by making little or nothing of their great deed, do impress on men's minds that here is something for all men to attempt on all days, thereby advancing not the mere glory of a single man, but raising the standard of an entire community, or even of a whole race; and, yes, of all men for all time it may be. Such a one is gone from us. God keep his soul."

"—his soul, Amen," said Mr. Duncan.

"—his dear soul forever, Amen," said Bess.

# XIX

## BETWEEN SHIPMATES

"FRENCHIE" and his old-time chum had not spoken to each other since the vessel had put out from Gloucester, and it was very awkward altogether. Here were two men who had to sit at the same table, to share the same bunk, and to overhaul trawls together in cramped quarters below, each trying, by every evasion of look, word, and deed, not to let on that he knew that the other even existed.

But there was no way out of standing watch, nor of taking the wheel the one from the other and passing the skipper's word—"By the wind," "east, half south, and nothing to"—or whatever else it might be. That was the hard thing—they could not conceal it from the crew—the having to speak to each other.

"And what's it all about?" queried the crew, and they would have liked to smooth matters out but knew better than to attempt it in the usual way, for neither was of the kind that open their hearts to casual inquiry, however well-intentioned. So, though the mystery had not been solved, it was a great relief to nearly all hands when, the vessel having arrived on the grounds, the two men put off to set trawls.

To nearly all. There were yet those who worried. "For, if a hundred-ton vessel is cert'nly narrow for two that's fallen out, what of a sixteen-foot dory?" mused these. "What of a sixteen-foot dory, where they can't be passing for'ard or aft without forever fallin' foul of each other?" and in the most incidental sort of way in the world they glanced over their shoulders—casting about for weather signs by the way—to see what the pair would do in the more restricted quarters.

But nothing happened—leastwise not in the sight of the crew. They only saw that it was Arnold, handiest to the baited tub of trawls, who cast over buoy and anchor; and Frenchie, the man of noted endurance even among a fleet of trawlers, who yanked the thole pins into their sockets and rowed superbly to the west'ard.

Ordinarily those two expert fishermen would not have gone astray that day. In their instinctive fashion both noticed the sure signs of fog before it shut out the vessel; but the wires were still down—neither was going to let on by so much as the least anxious exclamation that he felt the slightest concern. Even when the fog had enveloped them, and by concerted action there was yet time to haul their trawls and make the vessel before it was too late, neither betokened, by the faintest sign, his sense of impending peril.

So, the tide carrying them gradually beyond the sound of the horn, they let her drift. Each was cheerfully prepared to be lost and to die of hunger, thirst, exhaustion, or of all three combined, before he would speak the first word; and even later, when they could no longer doubt, with fog as impenetrable as a wall about and dark night upon them; with death, most likely, close at hand—even then they were prepared to continue the prideful silence.

During all that night their dory drifted, and neither man made move until dawn. Then did Arnold, who seemed to be waiting only for the light, pick up the low-marked water bottle and, carefully estimating with his eye, mark the half-measure of what remained with his finger-nail. Long he held the bottle aloft, ostentatiously elevated it, gagging with thirst though he was, and even clinked his cold knuckles against the glass; but Frenchie never turned to note the fair judgment. Arnold drank his religious half wrathfully and corked and set the bottle down with a rattle; whereat Frenchie turned leisurely, and, palpably without a look, drank what was left and tossed far away the empty bottle.

The splash of the bottle in the sea was like a signal to action. Arnold, taking the stern thwart and making a place for his feet among the fish, set his oars between the thole pins, and, auricularly assured that his mate was in position, began, by pulling on his left and backing on his right oar, to work the bow of the dory around. Instinctively Frenchie opened his mouth to protest, but, before the word could issue from his lips, bit it off savagely. No, he was not going to speak first; no, not even though speech might mean life to them.

Arnold's ear caught the gurgle behind, and, hoping that his mate was about to say something, paused gladly to hear it. Indeed, to his mind, the matter had gone far enough; but no word came to him, and sullenly he forced the oars through the water. His own ideas of the whereabouts of the vessel were vague, while his dory-mate, as all men knew, had a famous sense of location; and yet, if he didn't care enough about it to say a word, when he saw the dory being headed in the wrong direction, then he wasn't caring either. So away from the vessel, Frenchie by his silence concurring, they rowed the dory.

Rowing and resting—each consulting his own will as to that, but each doing manfully what he considered his share—they rowed on, night and day, and night and day again, with nothing to eat or drink, until the weary pain of it was beyond all mortal strength—certainly for Arnold, who well knew he never could last with the iron man behind him. Arnold by then had lost all count of time—whether three, four, or five days had elapsed he could not say—but he was struggling desperately to hold out, determined not to admit himself beaten; and yet he had about made up his mind at last to quit—to say, " Frenchie, I'm done," nothing else, when——

Frenchie, his eyes half closed, saw Arnold's back lunge forward. An instant later, he saw the oars slide through the thole pins and the body fall off the seat and into the bottom of the dory. Frenchie did not slack his stroke at once; only slowly did it dawn on him that Arnold really was unconscious. His first thought was one of exultation—and so he had worn him down? But, with another glance at the inert figure, tenderness and pity flashed from him. " No! " he cried, and bent over the limp body. " But so it ees." Even then he did not address a direct remark to the sagging body, but only picked him up and laid him in the stern. Long ago they had cast away the load of fish, and a light dory rides better for a weight in the stern. So Frenchie made a pretense of arguing, ashamed to admit even to himself that he had put his mate in the stern solely because it was the least uncomfortable place in the little boat. " And good summer weather," murmured Frenchie—" and so he shall not freeze."

Two more days and a night of lonely labor and Frenchie made out a red light bearing down. Perhaps a point off his own course it was, but still a good distance away, and there might be time to place the dory directly in her course. He had hailed a sail only the night before and got no answer. No more hailing at a distance for him! " A good t'ing her wasn't her starb'd light," said Frenchie, " or I wouldn't seen her so soon," and he tugged hard at the oars. " And now they must pick me up or run me down—and I not certain I care so much if she run me down, for I been damn tired."

But to be weary was not to be vanquished. No, nor near it.

Long days and nights of hunger, thirst, and travail on the lonely sea had not quenched his spirit. They used to say of Frenchie, on the vessel, that, if ever he should come to die, he'd certainly die hard. So "Aboard the barque!" he hailed now—"h—i—i—the barque!" There was nothing of deception in that barrel chest and bull neck. 'Twas the rumble of an organ. "H—i—i—hi—hi—i—the barque!" he hailed again, and to such effect this time that not only was the slumbrous watch awakened, but the mate, having a mug of coffee for himself in the galley, came bundling out on deck before the watch could call him.

The mate peered over the side. Coming suddenly from light to dark, he could as yet see nothing clearly. "Who is it?" he bellowed.

"Me!" answered Frenchie, from his dory.

The mate again peered over the rail, leaning now far out and down. He at last made out the shadow of the little boat below. "And who're you, and what do you want?"

"I'm Gloucester—American feesher-man—strayed from my ves—sel in fog. And thees my dory-mate—'most dead—maybe dead. Lower your falls, plees, and hoist heem aboard."

The resolute tone of Frenchie influenced the mate to quicker action than he had intended. He called for the man on watch to help him. The tackle was unhooked and dropped over. Frenchie made the line fast about his dory-mate, and anxiously observed it as the falls creaked above; and "Tak' a care—tak' a care—he 'most dead!" he warned in a plaintive voice, as he saw that the body was allowed to knock once or twice against the side of the barque.

"Take care? Who's doing this?" demanded the mate, and therewith, having Arnold's body on board, he allowed it to drop roughly to the deck; and "Come on, you, and hurry," he added, as he lowered the falls again.

"Yes, yes, but not so fast. Now, then, a'right—hoist away."

The men above tugged at the leads. The mate, noting what slow progress they were making, peered over the side. He soon understood what was wrong. "The blasted derelict! he's made fast his boat, too!" Man and dory were being hoisted together. "What in the devil's name does he think?—we're stevedores?" and he let slip the after falls.

Down splashed the stern of the dory and into it rushed the sea. It was up to Frenchie's knees in a moment, and, the men continuing to hoist, the bow of the dory was rearing up.

Frenchie, barely grasping the bow falls in time, began to climb, hand over hand to the rope and feet to the side of the barque. A moment later he was on the deck, but such work!

"Cast off!" ordered the mate. "And you—get below, you!" he barked at Frenchie, who was gazing over the side at his dory, now filled and drifting away, and almost sobbing as he gazed.

"You should not do that. Not right—not right—a beautiful do-ree, and four tubs fine trawl!" He repeated the words sadly.

"Blast you and your trawls—go below!"

"Oh, yes, I go below." Frenchie leaned against the rail for a moment. "You skipper?"

"No, I'm not skipper. He's below and asleep—and knows better than to wake easy or interfere when it's my watch. But go below, or I'll——"

Frenchie raised a deprecating hand. "Oh, oh—no need, sair"—and he stooped to lift his dory-mate. Arnold moaned as Frenchie raised him from the deck, and "Gra-a—" gurgled Frenchie, and he turned to carry him below; and, as on the vessel he and Arnold bunked in the cabin, so now he headed for the after deck of the barque.

"Come out of that—for'ard with you!" spluttered the mate. But Frenchie, by that time, was carefully descending the cabin steps with never a notion of turning back.

He laid Arnold on the nearest locker. Arnold groaned; Frenchie patted the haggard cheeks. "Steady, boy—steady! Soon you be all fixed up." For the first time since they had put out from Gloucester he touched Arnold with unrestrained tenderness, and the act gave him joy. "Hush, boy, hush!—you soon have the good hot coffee."

"Say it again—the good hot what?"

Frenchie looked up. The mate was at his shoulder, his eyes gleaming satirically. "The good hot *what*, did you say?"

"Coffee," repeated Frenchie. "He 'most dead. One, two, three"—he counted on his fingers—"seex, maybe seven days, seven nights, astray in hees do-ree. You been astray ever—not'ing to eat, not'ing to drink! He 'most dead, I say."

"And s'pose he *was* dead altogether—who's in command here? You damn Gloucesterm'n, it's just like one of you to think you c'n jump aboard here in the middle of the night and step into the officer's cabin and give orders. But not here, you don't. Maybe you can do that under your fast-and-loose American-manned, but not aboard this ship. Here"—he slid back a door in the bulkhead partition—"here's where you chaps go."

Frenchie peered in. What he saw was the hold of the barque, black and forbidding, piled high with coal. "In there?" Frenchie shook his head. "For me, ver' good; for my doree-mate, no. He need hot coffee and bunk. And hot coffee and bunk he *shall* have. Shall have, I say." Frenchie articulated those precise words with exceeding distinctness. "And right away—at once, I say. No?" Then, thanking the good God for the strength which all men said was his in abundance, he rolled back his sleeves. The uncovered forearms loomed round, bronzed, and abnormal in development. Small wonder he could row a dory. "Hot coffee for my doree-mate, I say. You hear eet?" and, his veins swelling large, he was about to leap on the mate when the cabin boy, awakened from his sleep, stepped into the light. Frenchie spied him. What need to fight, after all? "Get hot coffee and mak' up bunk—a good bunk for my shipmate. Jump! or I lick you, too!"

The boy looked to the mate.

"Oh, you want heem to give order?" Frenchie grimaced frightfully. "Well, in one mo-ment he shall order. Geev him order. No?" The battle was on. An immense creature was the mate, but of no high energy behind the vast muscles, nothing of the fiber of this wild man who had come aboard in the night, and who now, like a demon, saying never a word, but smashing, griping, throttling, using fingers, fists, elbows, knees—anything—head, shoulders—went at him, and soon made a mess of him. In five or six minutes it may have been, the big glowering hulk had been reduced to a groveling, bloody mass that sought to draw itself into the remotest corner of the cabin, to shrink itself into the seams of the planking, by way of caulking, as it were.

When there came no further oaths or words of abuse, Frenchie bent his head. "Well?" he asked, and relaxed his terrible fingers that the mate might speak the word.

"Coffee—hot—and biscuit," gurgled the mate to the cabin boy.

"And bunk?"

"And a bunk—two bunks."

"No—one bunk. The coal in hold plenty good for me," said Frenchie; and on the coal, when Arnold had come to life again and was tucked away in a bunk, he laid himself with heartfelt thanksgiving. *Bon Dieu,* but he was tired!

A long time Frenchie slept. The light of morning was flooding the companionway when he slid back the door in the bulkhead and stepped into the cabin. There was a pot of coffee on the cabin table and beside it some biscuits, to which, without seeking anybody's leave, he helped himself as naturally as if he were aboard his own vessel.

He ate all the biscuits on the table, and with them took four cups of coffee and would have taken more but that no more remained in the pot; after which, with sublime feelings in his heart, he ran up the companionway and all but bowled over a man that he guessed to be the master of the barque, as he leaped onto the deck.

It was a large but somewhat weak-looking man, who gazed admiringly and waved his hand pleasantly as Frenchie was about to apologize.

"You skipper?"

"In the ship's papers I'm so rated." Then, most irrelevantly, he asked, "You don't happen to want a second-mate's berth, do you?"

"I'm feesher-man."

"I know—I wasn't altogether asleep last night. You're the quality for second mate and you won't have to bother much with navigation. The mate will be most of your concern—just polish him off once in a while. Six or seven days astray, you say?"

"Seex or sev'n—hard to say—yes, sair."

"Lord, the things you could 'a' done, if you'd been fresh!—this morning, for instance."

"This morn!" Frenchie took a full breath and threw his head toward the blue sky. "This morn!"—and he gazed long on the green sea. "This morn!" and, looking ahead, he saw where the horizon lumped like a row of low clouds. "Land? So 'tees—yes. Ah-h—" and suddenly he leaped off the poop and ran forward. "Georgie!"

Arnold, who was leaning over the bow devouring the land with his eyes, did not hear Frenchie approach; and the latter, as he drew nearer, found himself overcome with the strangest feelings. Perhaps Arnold would not speak to him even now. He stood shy and silent, till Arnold, turning casually, saw him, and, catching the rare look in his shipmate's eyes, could no longer restrain himself. "Hullo, Frenchie!"

Frenchie felt ashamed—to think that he thought Arnold would not speak to him. "Hullo, Georgie!" and he smiled foolishly.

Then both were silent. It was almost as if they were in the dory again, with their grim wills in control. But Frenchie had been making up his mind all the length of the deck, and he was not to be overcome now. "How you feel, Georgie? A leetle tired, boy—yes?"

"A little, Frenchie. But if it hadn't been for you, I cal'late I'd be more than *tired*. I'd be dead and gone."

Frenchie fingered the collar of his flannel shirt. "Spick sense, Georgie—spick sense."

"That's sense. And, Frenchie——"

"Yes?"

Arnold looked fearfully at his mate. "Frenchie, 'bout that night down to Long Beach. Why, Frenchie, I had no more notion of tryin' to cut in on you than of—oh, all I saw was a girl that looked 's if she was waitin' for somebody—I'd no notion who for—and I butts in. And when you walked by—why, 'f I'd known 'twas for you she'd been waitin'——"

Frenchie laid a hand on his shipmate's arm. "Her? Georgie—boy, to hell with her. What one damn red-head girl, Georgie, between shipmates?" And so, reunited, they leaned over the bow and gazed fondly at the looming shore of their own country.

# XX

## SEIZURE OF THE AURORA BOREALIS

I HAD no notion in the beginning of going anywhere near Newfoundland that winter, but the word was passed to me from old John Rose of Folly Cove that if I thought of running down for a load of herrin', then he'd ought to have a couple o' thousand barrels, by the looks o' things, fine and fat in pickle, against Christmas Day, and old John Rose being a great friend of mine, and the market away up, I kissed the wife and baby and put out for Placentia Bay in the *Aurora*.

Now if anybody'd come to me before I left Gloucester that trip and asked me to turn a smuggling trick, why, I'd 'a' said: "Go away, boy, you're crazy." But on the way down I put into Saint Pierre. You know Saint Pierre? In the Miquelons, yes, where in the spring the fishing vesels from France put in—big vessels, bark-rigged mostly, and carrying forty or fifty in a crew—they put in to fit out for the Grand Banks fishing. And they come over with their holds full of wine. And in the fall they sail back home, but without the wine.

And, of course, somethin's got to be done with that wine, and though wine's as cheap in Saint Pierre as 'tis to any port in France, yet 'tisn't all drunk in Saint Pierre—not quite. The truth is, those people in Saint Pierre aren't much in the drinking line. One American shacking crew will come in there and put away more in one night than that whole winter population will in a week—that is, they would if they could get the kind they wanted. But that Saint Pierre wine isn't the kind of booze that our fellows are looking for after hauling trawls for a month o' winter days on the Banks. No, what they want is something with more bite in it. And what becomes of it? H-m—if you knew that you'd know what a lot of people'd like to know.

Well, I put into Saint Pierre, for I knew old John Rose and his gang of herring netters would cert'nly relish a drink of red rum now and again on a cold winter's night, and, going ashore, I runs into a sort of fat, black lad about forty-five, half French, half English, that was a great trader there, named Biller. 'Twas off him I bought my keg of rum for John Rose. I'd heard of this Biller before, and a slick, smooth one he was reported to be, with a warehouse on one of the docks.

He'd been looking at my vessel, he said, had noticed her come to anchor, and a splendid vessel she was—fast and weatherly, no doubt of that. Well, that was all right, for, take it from me, the *Aurora* was all that anybody could say of her that was good. And when you believe that way, and a man comes along and begins to praise your vessel like that, whether you like his sail plans or not, why you just naturally can't help warming up to him. We took a walk up the street together.

"And a master and a crew that knew how to handle her, too," Biller goes on. I blinked a little at that, straight to my face as it was, but after two or three more drinks I says to myself: "Oh, hell, what's the good o' suspectin' everybody that pays a compliment of trying to heave twine over you?" We got pretty friendly, and, talking about one thing and another, he finally asked me if I ever had a notion of selling my vessel. I only smiled at him, and asked him if he had any idea what she cost to build. I told him then. Fourteen thousand dollars to the day of her trial trip, and all the money my wife and I had in the world had gone into her. He had no idea she cost so much; but, on reflection, it must be so—of a certainty, yes. A splen-did, a su-pairb vessel, so swift to sail, so perfect to maneuver. If he himself possessed such an enchanting vessel—well, he could use her to much profit. There was a way.

He said that so slyly that I had to ask him what that way was. He winked. "I deal in wines—what way can it be?" And, of course, I winked back to show that I was a deep one too. It's wonderful what things a man c'n get up to wind'ard of you after he's half filled you up. Well, no more then, but we left our caffay for a walk around the port, me looking for a little souvenir in the jewelry line for the baby. Christmas was comin', and though I didn't expect to be home till after New Year's, still I wanted the wife to know I hadn't forgotten the baby.

I was tellin' that to Biller, and a little more about them, of how I hadn't been but a couple of years married, and how I kissed her and the baby good-by on the steps, and her tellin' me the last thing not to go piling the vessel up on the rocks anywhere, that the baby's fortune was in her now, and so on.

Well, sir, that farewell scene, that adieu, was too touching for him—he insisted on picking out the souvenir himself, and he picked out a good one, a pretty brooch to fasten the baby's little collar, and he paid for it—forty francs—and I just had to take it.

Well, we had another drink and parted, me not expecting to see any more of him; but that night as I was down on the dock hailing the vessel for a dory to go aboard, a man stepped up to me and laid his hand on my arm. "Captain Corning?" he said, and I said yes.

Well, he was a friend of Mr. Biller—he had seen me talking to Mr. Biller, and learned that I was about to depart in the early morning, bound for Placentia Bay; he would like to ask me to do him a small favor. Could I take one package and land it on my way to Auvergne, where was one friend of his? A small matter, one five-gallon keg of rum, that rum which was of such trivial price in Saint Pierre, but on which the duty was so high in Newfoundland, and his friend was one poor man, one fisherman, who could not afford to pay the duty.

Now this Auvergne was twenty-five miles this side of any port of entry, and my first landing in Newfoundland, according to law, had to be at a port of entry. And so I told this chap that, and how I was liable to a heavy fine, and so on.

Yes, he discerned much truth in what I said, but consider that poor fisherman who could have his good rum merely for the landing—no other cost, none whatever—he, a friend of Mr. Biller, was sending it as a gift for the holiday Christmas time. And that rum—consider the piteously cold nights hauling the nets when a drink of good rum was so soothing, so grateful, so inspiring. And a little favor like that—the Colonial Gov-er'ment would not be deprived of any vast sum for duty thereon—truly not—and if I did not take the rum that poor fisherman of Auvergne would have none in its stead. He could not afford it, the duty was so high—an impossible duty, as no doubt I knew.

I did know, and also I remembered many a drink of Saint Pierre rum I'd had on a cold night in Newfoundland and no duty paid on it, and many a cold night hauling herring when I didn't have it, but wished I had, and would've gone a long ways to get it, duty or no duty. And then I remembered how Biller had been pretty decent to me that day—the little brooch he'd bought for the baby I could even then feel in my vest pocket—and I said all right, and when half an hour later a dory slipped up to the side of the *Aurora* and a keg was handed over the rail I didn't ask any questions, but took and stowed it under the cabin run.

Next morning we sailed, and, after a four hours' easy run, made Auvergne, a little port in Placentia Bay, tucked away between two headlands—one easterly, one westerly. Coming from Saint Pierre, it was the westward one we rounded. According to directions, I ground out two long and two short woofs on the fog-horn, at which a man pops from behind a big rock and waves a handkerchief three times.

Well, that was according to directions, too, and I drops a dory over the side with Sam Leary and Archie Gillis and the keg in it, and tells them to row over to the beach, ask the name of the lad that jumped from behind the rock, and if it was the same as on the tag to leave the keg with him. It was about a mile to the bit of beach, and the dory was almost there, when from behind the easterly headland comes the revenue-cutter. "That looks bad," I says, "but we'll say we've come for fresh water, that our tanks were leakin', and that we had to have fresh water to cook dinner, and Sam and Archie in the dory—'specially Sam—they'll have wit enough to empty the keg over the side and go on up as if they was really lookin' for water."

And that's what would 'a' happened if it'd not been for the thirst that Sam Leary and Archie Gillis most always had with them. They see the revenue-cutter, and they knew just what they oughter done, but they couldn't let go that keg without having one last drink out of it, and when they got that drink down they couldn't help thinking what a pity to waste so much good rum, and taking a look back at the cutter, and seeing she was still half a mile away—"Time enough," says Sam to Archie—"this lad behind the big rock'll have something to stow it in," and he and Archie walks without any hurry up to the rock where the man was hiding.

But instead of one man behind that rock, there were six, and right away there was a battle. Sam and Archie bowls over a couple and gets away up the beach and safe among rocks, but the revenue people got the keg. By that time the cutter was alongside us, and so they wouldn't get the little Christmas keg I had tucked away for John Rose I pulled the plug out of it in no time and let it drain into her bilge. And that was an awful waste of good liquor, and I knew John Rose would grieve when I told him.

They had a clean case against me, and I was taken with the

*Aurora* to Harbor Grace for trial. When they asked me what I had to say, I told 'em that I was simply bringing a little keg of rum from a man in Saint Pierre to his friend in Auvergne. They asked me the name of the man in Saint Pierre, and I said I didn't know. They asked me the name of the man in Auvergne, and I said I didn't know. "Was this the man?" they asks, and shows me the tag on the keg. I didn't answer. And they went on to show there was no man in Auvergne by that name, and what were they to understand by that?

I told them I didn't know—it was past me. And it cert'nly was. But they knew what to make of it, they said. There were people in Auvergne doing this illegal business under false names. And I had used a false name, and to try to tell the honorable court that I did not know the name of the man in Saint Pierre who gave me the rum, nor the man I was bringing it to—why, I knew very well who gave me the rum, and I knew who I was bringing it to, and if the truth were known, I knew a lot more about the rum-smuggling traffic. And they were going to put a stop to it.

And they laid a fine of twenty-five hundred dollars against my vessel. Maybe you might think that a pretty heavy fine, but that's nothing. Almost any little local magistrate down that way can soak an American skipper or owner for almost any amount and get away with it. And how's that? Well, we pay two or three dollars a barrel to Newfoundland fishermen for herring. Before we went down here the St. John's merchants used to pay them about fifty cents a barrel, and the St. John's merchants weren't liking it, and they had their full share of say in the Colonial Gover'ment.

Well, when my little local magistrate fines me twenty-five hundred dollars I said I wouldn't pay it, that I'd stir things up at Washington, and so on, but they only laughed at me, and put her up for sale.

Now I'd've bid her in myself if I'd had the money, but I only had a couple of hundred dollars in cash for running expenses with me. All my Newfoundland friends down that way were poor people—fishermen. If 'twas home we could 'a' raised plenty of money on her, but I was in Newfoundland, not Gloucester, and they rushed the thing through.

Well, the *Aurora* was bid in for just the amount of the fine, and that was a shame, the vessel she was, and she was bid in by a man nobody seemed to know. I went to the man who bid her in and told him the whole story, of what the vessel meant to me, of how I came to bring the rum over, and asked him would he give me the chance to communicate with some business men in Gloucester and buy her back, but he only laughs at me, and laughs in a way to make me think I was a child.

And in one way I was sort of a child, then, but I didn't begin to realize how much of a child till I heard a voice giving orders to make sail on the *Aurora*. A coast steamer had just come in, and from her had come a crew of men to take the *Aurora* away, and this was the voice of the man who gave me the keg of rum that night in Saint Pierre. And while I was looking at him another man came alongside from the coast steamer, and this was Biller himself. If the *Aurora* had been within distance I would have jumped aboard; but she had her lower sails up then and was moving in pretty lively fashion out of the harbor.

I sat on a rock on the beach to think it over, and, "Alec Corning," I said to myself at last—"they cert'nly tried you with the right kind o' bait—and hooked you good."

And I wondered how I could get square with Biller. No use trying to stir up Washington. There was an old skipper of mine, and the Newfoundland gover'ment had fined him three thousand dollars once for just a difference of opinion and he couldn't pay it, and they had confiscated his vessel, and all he'd been getting out of Washington were State Department letters for ten years. And he had cert'nly as much political pull as I had, for I had none.

No, no State Department for mine, I says at last, and ships my crew up to John Rose to Folly Cove, telling them to help John with the herring, and to tell him, too, to save the herring for me, that I'd get 'em back to Gloucester some way, and myself takes passage next day on the mail packet to Saint Pierre.

It was after dark of Christmas Eve when I landed at Saint Pierre. I went up to Argand's Caffay, a place where all kinds of seafaring people used to go to get a drink and a bite to eat. There were quite a few in there now—French stokers from a steamer or two and half a dozen French man-o'-war's men from a French gunboat that was lying in the harbor, I remember.

I didn't see any American fishermen in Argand's, but I knew that some of 'em would be drifting in before long. And by and by a few did, but me saying nothing to any of them, only sitting over to a table in a corner with a little bit of supper, and thinking that it was going to be a blue kind of Christmas for me, and a blue Christmas at home, too, for by this time Gloucester must've got the news of the seizure of the *Aurora,* and somebody'd surely passed the word to the wife.

I was sitting there, in the corner, figuring things out and not bothering much about the people coming and going, when somebody sits down at my table, and no sooner down than I felt his boot pressing mine under the table. I looked up, and it was Archie Gillis.

"Where'd you come from?" I says. "All we need now for a perfect party is Sam."

"Sam's here too," says Archie.

"What's he doing? And you, too?"

"Gi'me a chance now, skipper," says Gillis, and orders a little something, and when the waiter was gone: "Sam's not far away. I left him up to Antone's rolling dice for turkeys. We came over, him and me, on a little French packet. Sam guessed you'd come back to Saint Pierre, and if you did he knew you'd drop in here. Sam'll be here soon, he guessed you'd come here. We've been tryin' to find out about the *Aurora.* She's in the harbor, and they're going to put out to-night."

"For where?"

"Well, it's a fishin' trip she's cleared for, but she's got more than fish bait in her hold."

Archie had been talking straight down at his plate. Now he stood up, and from behind his napkin said: "There's the skipper o' the *Aurora*—tryin' to collect his gang together. Don't look around. But he'll have hard work, 'cause Sam and me spent most of th' afternoon gettin' 'em drunk—'specially Sam. An' Sam says don't notice him when you see him come in, for the new *Aurora* gang don't know yet that we was any of your crew." Gillis tossed his napkin down and strolled over to the bar.

By and by I heard a familiar voice at the door—I could 'a' heard it a block—and pretty soon Sam himself comes rolling in. He was carrying a monstrous turkey, and he spied Archie first thing. And, "Hullo, Archie boy," he shouts. "Throw your binnacle lights on that, will you? Thirty pounds he weighs—like you see him—and twenty-five he'll weigh, or I'm no fancy poultry raiser, when he's ready for the oven."

Gillis poked his finger into the breast of the turkey. "I wish we had him for to-morrow, Sammie. He'd make a nice little lunch, that lad."

"Well, we'll have him, Archie, for to-morrow. We'll have him—the biggest turkey ever sailed out of ol' Sain' Peer. A whale, look at him."

"Aye, some tonnage to him. But y' never won him here, Sammie?"

"Win *him* here? *Here?* In Argand's? Ever know anybody win anything here? No, sir. I won him up to ol' Antone's. Twenty-seven throws at twenty-five cents a throw."

"Twenty-seven! You could 'a' bought two of 'em for that."

"Bought? Of course I could 'a' bought, but who wants to buy a turkey Christmas time? Why, any fat old shuffle-footed loafer can take a basket under his arm and go down t' the market and pay down his money and come away with a turkey or anything else he wants. 'Tain't the *getting* him, Archie—it's the winnin' him from a lot of hot sports that think they c'n roll dice. Twenty-seven throws I took and with every throw a free drink of good old cassy——"

"Twenty-seven drinks o' cassy! A lot you knew about what you was rollin' by then, Sammie."

"'Tain't what I knew, but what I *did,* that counted, Archie, and it takes more than twenty-seven glasses o' cassy to put my rail under. *You* oughter know that, Archie. I knew what I was doin'—don't worry. An' that twenty-seventh rollin'! I shook 'em up—spittin' to wind'ard for luck—and lets 'em run. And out they comes a-bowlin'. Seventeen! Cert'nly a fine run-off that, I says, and drops 'em in again, limbers my wrist a couple o' times, and then—two fives and a six—thirty-three! I gathers 'em in again, takes off my cardigan jacket, lays my cigar on the rail, jibes my elbows to each side—'Action,' I says. 'Action.' Yer could hear 'em breathin' a cable length all around me. I curls my fingers over the box, snaps her across an' back again. The len'th of the table they rolled. Three sixes—fifty-one. 'Mong doo,' yells ol' Antone—'Sankantoon—not since fifteen year do I see such play.' Well, for another hour they rolled, but that fifty-one was still high-line, an' I takes the turkey away. And alongside this lad when we have him to-morrow, Archie, there'll be a special bottle o' wine—some red-colored wine. I don't know the name of it. Good stuff, though, and ol' Antone gave it to me—a special bottle."

"An' well he might after all the money you spent there, Sammie."

"An' why not there as well as the next place? Why not there as well as here? Why not?" Sam glared down to the end of the bar, where Argand himself was taking in the cash, and his eyes, roaming 'round the room, caught mine and he winked. "A gen'l'man, ol' Antone, which every caffy keeper ain't—an' because he's a gen'l'man, and because some others ain't"—Sam looked around to see if Argand was getting that—"because some others ain't—because some others ain't, I say—an' I could name 'em, too, if I wanted—I could, yes."

I caught another flash from Sam's eyes, and, looking where his eyes pointed, I saw my *Aurora* captain and three or four of his crew, who had just come in.

"Name him, Sammie—name him," urged Gillis. "Name the cross-breeded dog-fish—name him, Sammie, name him."

All this was foolish enough, perhaps, but not to Henri Argand, who ran this place. He didn't have reputation enough to be able to stand off and laugh at Sammie and Archie—probably not—for by and by, with four or five helpers, he comes with a rush and in ten seconds it was a mix-up. Sam and Gillis put their backs to the bar and gave battle. There were only the two of them, and the turkey, at first. A great bird a turkey—especially when you swing him by the ankles. Down went a waiter, and down went another waiter. Sam made a couple of tremendous swipes, and then down went the *Aurora's* captain and one of his crew. The *Aurora's* captain's head, I thought, would be knocked clean off, the way the turkey hit him. Then over went a row of French stokers, and, with a backhanded sweep of the turkey, down went the bartender behind. And Sam and Archie, I could see, were working over to finish the *Aurora's* new crew, and would've got 'em, too, but Argand, inside the bar, picks up a bung-starter, sneaks down and gives Sam and Archie a couple of slick taps over the ear, and down they went—just slid feet first away from the bar and on to the floor, flat—and as they slid Argand reaches over and grabs the turkey out of Sam's hand.

That sort of put it up to our national pride—there was six or seven American fishermen in the place—and we waded in, and the French man-o'-war's men, they waded in, and it was one fine battle for maybe ten minutes, with nothing in the way of empty bottles, or full ones either, being overlooked in the line of weapons. And when we couldn't reach any more chairs or table legs we pulled off our sea boots, and, believe me, a big red jack with a three-quarter-inch sole and an inch and a half of heel—you grab a sea boot o' that size—it don't weigh more than four pounds or so—you grab it by the ears and get a full healthy swing on it and let it hit a man anywhere above the water-line, and he won't mistake it for any sofa cushion.

It was a fine fight, and I think we'd 'a' won out only for the reinforcements from outside. A liberty party of French man-o'-war's men come first, and then the police lads with the red trousers and the swords, and out we went into the street. And when they got us out they locked the doors and barred the windows.

While I was pulling on my redjacks again, out under the lamp, on the corner of the street, up comes Sam and Archie. "Say, Alec," begins Sam, "but you cert'nly laid 'em out with your sea boot."

I thought Sam and Archie would be pretty well smashed up, but there wasn't a mark on 'em except a couple of lumps behind their ears.

"Not us," explained Sam. "Nothin' happened to us except bein' stepped on a few dozen times. But did y' land the rest o' the *Aurora's* crew, Alec?"

"I don't know. I swung for 'em, Sam."

"You got 'em all right, and that'll put it out o' their heads to bother with the *Aurora* to-night, though"—he cocked up an ear to the whistle of a rising breeze—"it begins to feel like they wouldn't 'a' gone out anyway—it's breezing up so."

"Where's she layin'?"

"Off the end o' the big dock. An' if it keeps on breezin' they won't be goin' out in the mornin', either. A bad time anyway to put out on a cruise—Christmas Day. But what d'y' say, Alec, if we take a look around the place?"

We'd got a pretty good start for Christmas Eve, and around Saint Pierre we went, Sam and Archie and four men of the *Lucy Foster's* crew who'd been in the mix-up. They were ready to tear things up, but there wasn't much to tear up, because everybody heard us coming, and whenever we'd get to a place, we'd find the doors locked and the windows barred. The only place not locked that night was the little cathedral, and by and by, when we found there was no place else to go, we all went in there.

It was a midnight mass being celebrated, and it was the sound of the choir voices coming from there that got us, and, Catholics or no, no matter, all hands went in and heard mass, and when we came out, not feeling like trouble any more, we all went down to old Antone's and turned in.

Christmas morning everybody was feeling better, all but Sam Leary and me. I was thinking of my vessel, and Sam of his big turkey. He wanted to get that turkey. He wasn't going to leave Saint Pierre till he got it back. No, sir, he wasn't. And he had a pretty good notion just where it was then. Up to Argand's, cooking for Henri's Christmas dinner. And by and by maybe him gettin' fifty cents a plate for it for customers' dinners. And he'd cut up for about forty platefuls. And for forty plates at fifty cents or two francs a plate. "Mong doo an' sankantoon," yells Sam all at once. "Come on, Archie—come on, fellows"—and up the street went Sam and Archie and the four of the *Lucy Foster's* crew to see about the turkey.

But that wasn't getting me my vessel, and I went down to the water-front to look for her. There she was, my able *Aurora*, to anchor in the stream, and there was me on the end of the dock looking at her, and that's all I could do—look at her. She was layin' to two anchors and had her mains'l standing. A little further off shore and even her two anchors couldn't've kept her from dragging and piling up on the rocks with that mains'l up, for a rocky harbor is Saint Pierre, and now it was blowing a living gale of wind.

While I was standing there on the big dock, along comes the trader Biller with another chap. Biller must've seen me, but he pretended not, and I didn't make any sign I saw him. He pointed out the *Aurora* to the man, saying a few things in French. And then he raised his voice.

"When it moderates she will depart—and with a car-go," he said—the last in English, and by that I knew he meant for me to hear. "Go on," I grit out, "go on, have your fun."

"Yes, I pur-chased her ver-ry cheap," goes on Biller, and just then there's a great racket, and down the dock on the run comes Sam with his big turkey, which was all cooked, I could see, fine and brown—and Archie behind Sam and the four *Lucy Foster* men behind Archie and behind them again a bunch of Argand's waiters and the gendarmes with the red trousers and swords.

There was a dory tied up to the end of the dock, I don't know who owned it, but there it was. "Come on—jump in," I yells, and all hands piled in, and we shoved off—all in one motion almost, and by the time Argand's crowd got to the string-piece we were a vessel length away, and pulling like homeward bound.

"Drive her!" I kept yelling to the fellows at the oars.

"Aye, drive her, and we'll eat that turkey for Christmas yet," yells Sam.

"Drive her, and we'll have more than the turkey," I says.

"What's that we'll have, Alec?" hollers Sam.

"Pull to the *Aurora* and see," I hollers back. It was blowing so hard we could hardly hear each other, and what with the chop we were driving the dory through, we might's well have been in swimming.

We made the *Aurora*, and, looking back as I leaped over her rail, I could see Biller running back up the dock.

"Hurry, fellows," I yells to them, "Biller's gone to head us off."

As we drop onto the *Aurora's* deck a head pops out of the fo'c's'le companionway. He looked like he'd just come out of a fine sleep. "You," I yelled, "allay you—rauss—beat it," and rushed him to the dory we'd just come aboard in. He looks up as me in the most puzzled way. Two more heads popped up out of the companionway. "And allay you two," yells Sam and Archie, and grabs 'em and heaves 'em into the dory, casts off her painter, and they drifts off like men in a trance. One minute they were sound asleep in their bunks and the next adrift and half-dressed in a dory in the middle of the harbor with a gale of wind roaring in their ears and a choppy sea wetting 'em down.

"In with her chain-anchor slack," I calls, "and then up with her jibs," which they did. "And now her fores'l—up with her fores'l." Then we broke out her chain-anchor. I was to the wheel and knew the second the anchor was clear of the bottom by the way she leaped under me. "Don't stop to cat-head her big anchor," I calls. "Cut her hawser." They cut her hawser free, and with the big anchor-rope kinking through the hawse-hole, away went the *Aurora*, picking up headway fast, the chain-anchor with its three or four fathoms of chain still out and tucking it under her bilge; and there that anchor stayed, jammed hard against her bottom planking, while she rushed across the harbor.

"Now," I said, "let's see if we c'n work out of this blessed pocket without somebody having to notify the insurance companies afterward."

All along the water-front the people by now were crowding to look at us. All they saw was an American fishing schooner with a crazy American crew trying to pick her way through a crowded harbor with her four lowers set in a living gale.

We were across the harbor in no time. "Stand by now—stand by sheets," I sung out. Steady as statues they waited for the word, and when they got it—"Har-r-d a-lee-e!" Whf-f the steam came out of them, and the busiest of all was Sam Leary, with the big turkey between his feet.

As she came around I was afraid her anchor would take bottom and her way be checked. It did touch, but the *Aurora* spun on her toes so quick that before that anchor knew it was down she was off and flying free again.

All this time I was looking around for Biller and at last I saw him in a little power boat. He had the French gunboat in mind, that was sure, but his craft was making heavy weather of it, and before he was half-way to the gunboat we were under her stern, on our drive for the harbor entrance, and from the gunboat's deck they were peeping down on us, grinning and yelling, not knowing what it's all about, except they're waiting to see us pile up on the rocks somewhere.

But no rocks for the *Aurora* that Christmas Day. She knew what we wanted of her. There's a spindle beacon in Saint Pierre harbor, white-painted slats on a white-painted rock sticking out of the water, and there was a French packet lying to the other side. We had to go between. I knew they were betting a hundred to one we'd hit one or the other.

We weathered the packet and squeezed by the beacon. The end of our long bowsprit did hit the white-painted slats, gave 'em a good healthy wallop, but that wasn't any surprise—we figured on going close. We were by and safe, and looking back from the wheel to mark her wake swashing over the very rock itself, I had to whisper to her: "*Aurora,* girl, you're all I ever said you were." But if you'd seen her, the big spars of her, the set of her rigging, the fine-fitting sails, the beautiful line of the rail, and the straight flat deck, you'd have to admit it wasn't any surprise. You couldn't've done it with every vessel—but the *Aurora!* A great bit of wood, the *Aurora!*

And looking past her wake, I picked out Biller's motor boat along inside the French gunboat. But no gunboat was worrying me then. They might chase me, but the gunboat wasn't afloat that could've chased and caught the *Aurora* in that gale. A man didn't need to be a French captain to know that.

But for fear they might chase us, I kept her going. And after we'd had time to get our breath, we took a peek into her hold. And it was loaded with cases—wine, brandy—liquors of all kinds. And the gang said: "How about it, skipper?" And I said: "Help yourself—you've earned it," and they helped themselves.

And they had their promised Christmas dinner. The turkey had only to be warmed up. And while it was warming up, Sam told about the recapturing of it. "He was in the kitchen—just been hauled out the oven—and the chef, he was standing over him with a big carving knife, when I spots the pair of 'em through the window. 'Stand by, fellows,' I hollers, and jumps through the window and grabs the carving knife and chases cheffie out the room with it. And back through the window comes me and the turk. An' they all hollers murder and comes after us. And look at him now! Twenty-five pounds he weighs—the biggest turkey, I'm tellin' you, ever sailed out of ol' Saint Peer. A whale, twenty-five pounds as he lies there. And four kinds of wine—four kinds. Cassie, champagne, claret, which you don't have to drink 'les you want to, and that red-colored wine I don't know the name of, but good stuff—I sampled it. And that's what I call a Christmas dinner."

And I guess it was. Pretty soon they were hopping around like a lot of leaping goats. The best-natured crowd ever you see, mind, but it was Christmas Day, and they'd done a good job; the blood was running wild inside them, and I let them run awhile. And then when I thinks it time to begin to straighten them out, I looks them over and finally picking out Archie Gillis I says, "Archie, I think you're the drunkest! Take the wheel and soak it out."

And Archie stood to the wheel, and up the cabin steps the rest of the gang kept passing him drinks of champagne when they thought I wasn't looking.

By dark of that Christmas we shot into Folly Cove in Placentia Bay and came to anchor off John Rose's wharf. And the *Aurora's* crew were there helping John, and there was the load of herring John had promised. And he thought I'd come for the herring, but I hadn't—not yet. I had a word in private with John, and he found a nice little place among the cliffs, and with John Rose and the *Aurora's* crew it didn't take long to stow those cases of wine where no stranger would find them in a hurry.

And when that was done I goes over the papers again. And sure enough, her papers read for a fishing trip to the Grand Banks. Her crew had been shipped for a fishing trip. Her gear, dories, bait (not much bait, though) was all for a fishing trip. It was plain as could be, I had Biller under my lee. And so we put out again into the night, and before daylight we were back in Saint Pierre harbor again, and all hands ashore.

And when Biller woke up in the morning there was the *Aurora* laying to anchor in the stream just where she'd been the morning before. And we were having a nice little breakfast up to Antone's when Biller and the governor of the Islands and the gunboat captain comes to get me. And Biller is going to arrest me, put me in irons, not a minute's delay, not one, and I says "For what?" And Biller throws up his hands and repeats: "For what? He says for what? Mong Doo, for what?" And I says: "Yes, for what? What are you going to arrest me for? For a little excursion trip, a little run off shore, is it?—so's to eat our Christmas turkey in peace?" I see that my play lay with the French naval officer, so I turns to him. "There was a turkey, Capitaine. Old Antone here will tell you that it belonged to one of my men, Mr. Leary here—that he won it fairly, and that the same turkey was stolen from him in Henri Argand's. And Mr. Leary got it back. And they would not let him have it in peace, and so, to escape mistreatment, we jumped aboard the first vessel we saw in the stream and put out the harbor. You yourself, doubtless, saw us." He nodded. "Your whole crew saw us. The whole harbor saw us. There was no concealment." I stopped for the French captain and the governor to get that. Biller was looking at me goo-goo-eyed, but both the officials nodded and said: "That is true."

"And when we found ourselves safe out to sea, we had our dinner, our Christmas dinner—in the peace we had sought. And surely these gentlemen"—I bowed my best to the gunboat captain and the magistrate—"do not consider that a crime—to ask to be allowed to eat our Christmas dinner in peace."

Biller was fair up in the air by then—"You pi-rates—pi-rates."

I leaps to my feet. "Pirates—to me? To these men? Simple honest fishermen who know only toil? Who toils harder than they? Pirates—to them! Why, if they were anything but the simplest and honestest set of men, they would have taken that vessel out of my hands and sold her—sold her in the States—and what could you or I or anybody have done about it? But did they—or I? No, sir. As soon as we had finished our Christmas dinner we brought her back."

"But the wine?" shrieks Biller.

"What wine?"

"The wine—the wine—her cargo of wine."

"Wine? Cargo of wine—what's he talking about?" I looks at my crowd, and they all says: "Wine? Cargo of wine?—he's crazy."

I turns impatiently to the governor and French captain. "Gentlemen, this is a serious accusation, but easily settled. If there was wine in that vessel, surely her papers will say something of it. It will be on her manifest, that is certain."

Now these two, the governor and the French naval officer, were honest men, or if they weren't they cert'nly acted that way. "That is so," they said. "He is quite right—quite right," and looked at Biller, and Biller, with his eyes like door-knobs, looks at me. And I gives him a wink with my wind'ard eye and he near blew up.

But he begins to see a thing or two, so he goes off with the French officials, but before we had finished smoking our after-breakfast pipeful he comes back—alone now—and says: "What do you propose?" And I said: "Within a thousand miles of here is a friend of mine with a lot of wine—as good a lot as the *Aurora* had in her hold yesterday—maybe a couple of dozen quarts shy—you know, a Christmas dinner, and so on—and only last night my friend was figuring it up, and he thought there was twenty thousand dollars' worth of wine in this lot of his, and that's without figuring in the duty—but he don't care for wine much—but he does love a good vessel, and he was looking the *Aurora* over and he said he'd be willing to exchange all that wine for the *Aurora*. I told him that the *Aurora* only cost you twenty-five hundred, but he said, 'No matter, I have a weakness for the *Aurora*,' this friend of mine. Of course there'll be a few little extra expenses you'll have to pay for, like the hawser and the big anchor cut away and the keep of a crew for a week over in Newfoundland, and so on, but that won't be much—five hundred dollars ought to cover it all."

And Biller gave back the *Aurora* and paid over the five hundred, and I gave him an order on John Rose for the wine and a silver dollar. He asked me what the dollar was for and I tell him to make the sale legal. I always did believe in doing things accordin' to law. And then I took the little baby's brooch out of my pocket and handed it back to him.

And then I sailed over to Placentia Bay in the *Aurora* and took seventeen hundred barrels of herring off John Rose and put out, and, getting the first of a stiff easterly, the *Aurora* carried it all the way to Gloucester. And I was home to the wife and baby by New Year's. And the baby got a good brooch. I could afford it. From the profits of seventeen hundred barrels of fine fat herring I could well afford it.

I haven't seen Biller since, but they say he's shyer than he used to be of simple Gloucester fishermen.

# XXI

## CLANCY

### I

In the harbor of St. Pierre, Miquelon, a Gloucester fisherman, the *Tubal Cain,* was lying at anchor, and tramping her quarter was her master, Joshua Bradley, now so indignant that the deck-planks were ringing under his boot-heels. Only a most godly effort of will was holding down the righteous wrath of Captain Joshua, who had just discovered that Clancy was not aboard.

"If ever I ship a drinking man again may the——! Drunk coming out o' Gloucester—drunk all the time we was laying into Halifax—yes, by Jehoshaphat, drunk—and now drunk here—and drunker, I'll bet, than he ever was to the west'ard, because what with cassy wine and red rum so cheap most anybody's got money enough to get drunk and stay drunk——Yes, by the hosts of Pharaoh, yes, sir."

Captain Joshua stamped the quarter and looked wrathfully toward the town. From his New England point of view there was nothing uplifting in the situation. The one man of the crew that knew every harbor on the Newfoundland coast, the one man that knew every cove and headland in Placentia Bay, the one man that knew all the native fishermen in all their moods—this one man was now drunk as great Jehoshaphat—yes, sir, drunk as—by the rod o' Moses there warn't no comparisons strong enough. And the worst of it—he was drunk ashore. If he was drunk in his berth now, they could swing her off and go along, and let him come-to on the drive to the gulf. But he was drunk ashore!

Captain Joshua turned to that member of the crew who had earned distinction as being the last man in Clancy's company. "Where'd you say you left him?"

"Oh, up in one of them caffies—one of them caffies with a queer name, up by the square where the blue pump is out in the middle."

"Where the pump is? You don't mean the Caffy Middy?"

suggested Captain Josh, with the air of one who sought not to get a reputation as being really knowing in regard to such places.

"That's it, Captain—the Caffy Middy."

"And when'd you leave him, did you say?"

"'Bout one this morning."

"'Bout one? H-m-m—a good time for you to be comin' aboard. He was drunk then, I s'pose?"

"Oh-h, not real drunk. He could hold his feet all right."

"Could he though? Must've felt proud of himself. Could hold his feet, could he?"

"Yes, because he came across the room where I was talking to one of the waiter girls—the one in the green waist. Maybe you noticed her, Captain, when——"

"Noticed her?" roared Captain Josh. "And how in the name o' the Lost Tribes d'y' s'pose I'd come to notice her?"

"Oh, I didn't know but what you dropped in to rubber 'round—to kind o' keep an eye out for Tommie maybe."

"No, I didn't drop in to kind o' keep an eye on Tommie. D'y' think I got no business ashore but rubberin' into caffies or lookin' out for Tommie? What'd he do then?"

"Oh, he comes over. 'Get out,' he says to me, 'allay—the likes o' you to try and polley-voo to a French lady—the likes o' you!' He was good-natured enough, but he pushes me out the way just the same.

"'Maybe you think she'd like to talk with you with that swelling on your jaw,' says I. He'd a fine big lump on his jaw where I guess some Frenchman—maybe three or four—slammed him. 'Maybe you think you're the handsome boy 'round here?' I says.

"''Tain't handsome boys—'tis winnin' ways that counts,' he says. 'Ness pah, belle mazelle?' he goes on, and winds up with, 'Let me whisper in her ear.' So I left him whisperin' and came aboard."

"And when was that, d'y' say—one o'clock?"

"Oh, one or two, along there."

"H-m-m—one or two or three or four, I s'pose—any old time so long's I was turned in. Two o'clock in the mornin'—if it warn't three or four or five or six—and whisperin' to a lady in the Caffy Middy. And he's whisperin' yet if I know him. I've knowed him to stay whisperin' for a week once he started in.

Maybe some of you could go ashore and get him. Did you say he warn't real drunk?"

"Well, not what you'd call ossified. His tongue was loose anyway. 'Bong swor, mazelle,' he was saying, 'bong swor. 'Tain't like I can't polley-voo French,' he says to me, when I was goin' away. ''Tain't like I can't say a word to the lady in her own beautiful language—her belle languajh. This ain't my first stop ashore in Miquelon—no, nor my twenty-first maybe. Bong swor, mazelle,' he goes on, 'vooz eightay so belle—most belle—vooz.' I followed him along that far because I knew that much French myself."

"Huh!" sniffed Captain Joshua, "I don't guess you'd have to follow him so much further for all the French he knows! And if it warn't for them few kegs of red rum we got below, and me dependin' on him to squeeze it through for me, I'd say 'to the devil with him.' I s'pose he'll get to thinkin' soon we can't get along without him, but two of you drop into that dory and waltz up to the Caffy Middy and see what condition he's in—get him aboard if you can. Yes, by Jehoshaphat, he'll get to thinkin' the vessel can't get along without him. Get her under way the rest of you, while the dory's gone. Make sail, main and fore, and then start the chain and we'll up jibs and be ready to go by the time the dory's back."

## II

When Tommie Clancy came to himself in the Café du Midi he first sought to discover what day it was.

"Kell ay le joor?" he inquired of the rather elderly woman behind the bar.

"I spik no Anglish," she returned.

"What the—pardong, mazelle. Well, let me think now. O yes, kell ay larjoordwee—Monday, Tuesday—Lundi, Mardi, Mercredi, Jeudi——"

"Oh-h—Mercredi—oui, oui, Mercredi!"

"Wednesday! By the Lord, then Captain Josh has sailed away—sailed away." He lounged toward the nearest window, looked out across the harbor and began, not without melody—

Oh, my captain sailed away
Out o' Massachusetts Bay
In the merry month o' May,
To go a-whalin'.

And my captain says to me
Before he sailed to sea—
"If you get drunk," says he,
"You get a whalin'."

And I says, "O Captain mine"—
My eyes were runnin' brine—
"Your evil thoughts of me
Give me sorrow.
I'm going ashore," says I,
"I'll behave most proper-lie,—
And be with you at the dawnin'
Of the morrow."

But my captain sailed away
Without me o'er the bay—
My captain sailed away
To go a-whalin'.
'Bout the time he sailed away
Out o' Massachusetts Bay
They had me in a cell
Awaitin' bailin'.

Oh, my captain sailed away
Out o' ———

"Let him sail!" Tommie abandoned his warbling, turned, and caught the eye of a rather fleshy and very black-haired man of middle age, who sat at a table, the only other man in the place, and who, as Tommie's gaze met his own, promptly stepped forward and with a beaming smile inquired, "I can help you—perhaps?"

Tommie look him over. "You speak pretty good English, m'sher. Frenchy-voo?"

"Not ex-act-ly."

"Anglish?"

"Not ex-act-ly."

"Not ex-act-ly. Not French, not English, and I know you're no American—the trade-mark ain't on you, but you speak pretty good English for a foreigner."

"I am half French, half English—my father English, my mother French. My name—it is Billair. B-i-l-l-e-r—Billair."

"Biller? And I'll bet you're a fox."

The stranger smiled. "No, no—no—no fox, as you say."

"No? Well, my name is Clancy."

"I know. And your vessel has sailed yesterday morning.

The captain he could not wait. Two men they tried to wake you, but——. You were—well—you—were——"

"Drunk?"

"Oh-h, no. Sleepy, I should say."

"Sleepy? I was drunk."

"Drunk? Well, perhaps so—if you yourself say it—yes. They said—the men—that your captain he did not like it. They said you could come after him when you got sober or go back to Gloucester, as you pleased. He did not like it that you drink so much wine."

"He didn't? The blessed old deacon. What under the sun ever drove him to fishing, I don't know. Said I could go back to Gloucester, eh? Well, maybe I will. Wait, now—when does the steamer leave for Halifax?"

"There is one in two days."

"Then I'll take it—if I've got enough money. Wait, now, till I see."

Tommie overhauled his pockets. He gathered from his trousers, his vest, and the little finger pocket in his coat, a loose collection of French, English, and American coins. "Wait, now." He sorted them out on the bar, and began to figure. "Let me see now. Here's two American quarters and four francs and three Newfoundland quarters and here's—— By the Lord, but I'm flush. And how much to Halifax by the cheapest ticket?"

"To Halifax? About five dollairs—third class."

"Five dollars? And I got two fifty. That'll get me half way. That won't do, will it? No half-way stations at sea, is there? No. Wait, now. Two fifty. See here, Mister Biller. You're a sporting gent, I know. I can see that by the look of you. Sporting blood is just running around as loose as can be inside of you, I'll bet. I'll cut cards with you for this two fifty. There's a pack on that table there."

"Very well, sair."

They cut. Tommie turned a queen and the stranger a four.

"You win, Mistair Clancy. I will try you again. Do you say, Yes? For the five dollairs? Very well, sair. One two-spot—oh, oh, one two-spot. And you, Mistair Clancy?"

"Me?" Tommie flipped it up. "One ten-spot, Mister Biller."

"You are lucky, Mistair Clancy. Shall we say again? Twenty dollairs you will then have, if you win."

"Twenty dollars, eh? That's right—if I win. I don't like the way you said it, Mistair Biller, but here's a go. And if I win, Mistair Biller, I stop card-cutting right here and I go by first cabin to Halifax. I want to warn you so you won't feel put out. Here you are. A king!—there's a hot one for you, a king!"

"And I—a king also!"

"Follow your hand, old man. Now what!— an ace? Good Lord, what am I up against? Wait, now. Watch the professair. Wait, now—watch—a deuce! Blessed Lord, think of that—a measly little two-spot! If I was only half-way in it, but a deuce against an ace! Wait, now. Here's this dime and nickel—fifteen cents. Come, now, give me a run for the fifteen cents. Come now, where's your Anglo-Franco sporting blood? Give me a run for the fifteen, Mister Biller. Come, now."

"As you say, Mistair Clancy, but I do not like that—to take your last cent. I would not be like what you call a sporting gent." He smiled like an honest fellow.

"Well, maybe you're right. It looks like reneging, too, after sayin' I was going to quit if I won that last one. But the fifteen ain't any use to me, so let's have a drink with it. Come, now, and if the mazelle behind the bar'll let us have two drinks for it, we'll have a little touch."

"With pleasure, Mistair Clancy. You are what you call in your country—gam'—gam'—game! Ah, that is it—you are game! It is in your eye."

"In my eye?—h-m—like that twenty I thought I had when I saw the king. No, you're not a fox—oh, no. Drink up and let's have another little touch. Oh, I forgot—I'm broke. If I was in Halifax now—I know a party in Halifax—but maybe you can tell me how I'm going to get a passage to Placentia Bay."

"I think I know. And have a leet-le—ha—tush with me. That is a new word for me—a leet-le tush. Have a tush with me, Mistair Clancy."

"I don't mind. And you think you can land me in Placentia pretty soon? Well, you do and you're all right. Here's a shoot."

"And me—a shoot also." Biller touched his lips to the glass. "And now let us go to that table in the corner and I will tell you. But perhaps we may need some wine while we talk. Antoinette—O, Antoinette." He motioned to the woman behind the bar, and she brought over a bottle and two glasses.

They poured out another drink. Biller bowed and just touched his glass. Tommie nodded and drained his to the bottom. He smacked his lips, fingered the bottle, studied the label, said, "Ah, cassy, ain't it?" with much satisfaction, set the bottle down regretfully, looked resolutely over to his new acquaintance, and said, "Drive her."

"I have in the harbor," began Biller, "a fine vessel, a fine vessel. She was one time of Gloucester, one of your fishermen. She is very good schooner and you will like her, I know."

"I will like her—is that so?"

"Wait. One time here in Saint Pierre we did a very good business in Newfoundland herring. Every spring our sheeps—our schooners—come over from France and go over to bait in Newfoundland—in Fortune Bay, in Placentia Bay, at Saint John's, and so on. You understand?"

"So far, yes. But what is it all about?"

"One mo-ment. Our fishermen—but first, let us have anothair leetle tush, as you say. Come, now, as you also say, Mistair Clancy. Come, now. It is good wine—of the best, is it not?"

"Of the swellest. And I don't know but I will. Have a touch yourself?"

"No, no, but drink you—you, who are my friend. You honor me."

"That so? Well, stick to me, old man, and you'll die in honor. Here's a shoot."

"Thank you. Well, our French fishermen can no more come over to the Newfoundland coast and get bait without—without we get pairmit, and pairmit costs a dollair and a half the ton. A dollair and a half the ton our sheeps must pay. You know that, Mistair Clancy? Very well. I have, I myself, four sheeps which fish on the banks. Well, there is twelve hundred tons at a dollair and a half the ton. I have also four more sheeps of Bordeaux in the old country which look to me. Their captains come to me every year for bait. There is twelve hundred tons more. Twelve and twelve, that is twenty-four hundred tons at a dollair and a half the ton. How much must I pay, Mistair Clancy? You, who are the quick cal-cu-la-tor, how much shall I pay?"

"How much? Wait, now. I'll have to stop drinking cassy if I've got to figure. Wait, now. O yes—thirty-six hundred dollars."

"Well, do you see nothing, Mistair Clancy?"

"I begin to get a glimmer. Thirty-six hundred dollars before you can buy any bait for your own little fleet this spring?"

"Ex-act-ly—and why? Because over in Newfoundland they know that Saint Pierre and Miquelon belong to France and that we cannot help ourself. They think so and they are right—maybe. Will you honor me, my friend? Ah, yes—a leet-le tush—allow me. It is good wine—yes? I will drink with you this time. To your very fine health, Mistair Clancy."

"Throw it into you, and here's hoping you'll die the way you like best."

"Thank you. And if I can obtain the bait I can have twenty other sheeps for which to furnish bait this spring to come. Now, our captains say they will not go to Newfoundland and pay the tax—a dollar and a half the ton. They will not pay the tax to the English flag. They will get bait some other place. But no-tice, Mistair Clancy, no-tice. If bait is here our fishermen will buy. If herring is here our fishermen will buy—yes, oh, yes. And over there in Newfoundland, in Fortune Bay, in Placentia Bay, everywhere is plenty herring—for how much? For how much, Mistair Clancy?"

"Oh, cheap, dirt cheap. On the *Tubal* we expected to pay a dollar and a quarter or a dollar and a half."

"There—one dollar and a half shall we say? And here how much? Five dollairs. Yes. There it is. My schooner now here in Saint Pierre will carry fifteen hundred barrels, if you load her deep. And you would load her deep, most deep, I am sure, Mistair Clancy. You begin to see? You know the coast well, Mistair Clancy—nobody better. And you are a bold man, a bold man, Mistair Clancy. You are a man—how shall I say? —a man of resource, yes. You know your bees-i-ness—that is it, Mistair Clancy—you know your bees-i-ness—hah?"

"M-m——Easy there or I'll take to blushing. Let's have another little touch and think it over. And better float another bottle—this one's high and dry."

"Anothair bottle—cert-ain-ly. A dozen if you weesh it. O, Antoinette, Antoinette—of the same, Antoinette. She goes. It comes. It comes, my friend. And you are a man who likes li-i-fe, Mistair Clancy. You like wine, music, the dance, the pree-ty face—a-ha-a—you like to li-i-ve, Mistair Clancy, and you do not fear to take a chance, as you would say in your country. You see, I know you fishermen of Gloucester and I spik your style sometimes. Shall I drink to our success?—you shall have one-quartair of the profits."

"Yes? But ain't you kind of rushing things along?"

"Ah, but you are not one who hes-i-tates. No, sair, not you, Mistair Clancy. Your good health, your very best health, mon camarade—my friend."

"Well, here's a shoot. I'm stranded and you're a fox. What kind of a crew can I get?"

"Whatever you weesh. Yourself, a cook, and four men, five men, seex men, or more if you weesh it so."

"Six men and a cook will be plenty to handle her if she's that vessel layin' down at your dock. I s'pose that's your dock and store near where our vessel was layin' Monday. Our skipper must've bought his rum from you?"

"Ah-h—say nothing. Your skippair is a fox, as you yourself would say. Reads the Bible, but a fox."

"H-m-m—you've got Captain Josh properly tagged, ain't you? And I s'pose you've got me sized up, too?"

"Oh, Mistair Clan——"

"Oh, Mistair Biller! It's all right. You can't hurt my reputation. I've been three times disrated—three times I've been skipper, and three times back to the forehold. That's pretty near the record for a man of thirty-six. That's all, thirty-six. A little gray around the temples and a little strained in the heart, but only thirty-six, Old Man."

"Ah, you have the vi-vac-ity of a boy, Mistair Clancy. You have the nerve—what a soldier is in you! And when you are going, I shall give you a letter of credit to a collector of customs over there, who will protect you in his district. You understand? He will wink the eye, look the othair way. But do not use it unless you are about to be captured, because he will want a share, you understand, a share. He knows not of this schooner—that it is my schooner. No. And so, you understand, why pay out more than is nec-es-sary? But, of course, if you are in a tight place——"

"I can use it," finished Clancy. "But don't try and fool me like you're fooling this collector you're speaking of. No double-cross or you and me'll get in a knot. Remember, you do unto me as you would have me do unto you, as Captain Josh is fond of saying. But if it's to be the other way—you do me and you can count on it I'll do you—or try to. I'll stop at nothing

—nothing—once the war's on. And now you want to fit this vessel out. By the way, what's her name?"

"Any name you please—for this voyage."

"For this voyage?—you're sure a fox. Well, call her the *Marguerite.*"

"As you say. This very day it shall be painted on—*Marguerite.* It is pree-ty."

"So was she. Let's have one to *Marguerite*—

Oh, have you seen my *Marguerite?*
O *Marguerite,* O *Marguerite*—

But of course you ain't. Nor nobody else around here—she's a dream. Here's a shoot. Now you want to load her up with plenty of cassy wine and red rum in her fore and after runs. I'll attend to the stowing of it after we put out."

"It is done—cassis wine and red rum. And a case of champagne for yourself—in your own locker."

"Well, now—a case of champagne! Good! Biller, you're all right. And I'll load her so full of herring that we'll have to pile the chain anchor on the hatches to keep 'em under."

"Ah, what a man! They told me about you. What a man! They told me."

"Did they? Did Captain Josh quote something from Scripture to specially fit my case? And we'll need some ready money. Now you don't know but what I might jump out on you, so I don't ask you for any money, but give it to some one of the crew you can trust. Make one of them purser."

"The cook, Mistair Clancy, shall be my brothair."

"Shall he, though?—the cook? All right. How do you say cook in French?"

"Oh—le cuisinier, le chef, le cordon bleu, maybe, but——"

"Quee-see-neer—chef—cord-ong, cord-ong blur—in case I have to call him in a hurry, you know. Quee-see-neer—chef—how's that last?—O yes, cord-ong blur. I'll remember those."

"Very well. His name is Jean, my brothair Jean. He spiks English and French also."

"Jean—Jane—I'll remember that, too. Jane, O Jean, my pretty Jane. Speaks English and French, does he? That'll be good—to have somebody aboard c'n speak English and French both. In case we have to slip the anchor or take off sail so's to hide against a black rock in a hurry and the crew don't get on to my accent quick enough, I'll wake the cook. You've got to be ready for such things. You can't tell, our luck might be as bad's that. We may have to heave a cask over—with a line made fast to it, of course—a good strong painter and little buoys like they use for lobster pots. Who knows, we may have to heave a collector of customs over——"

"The collector! But with care, Mistair Clancy, with care."

"With care—cert'nly, with care. By the Lord, but I b'lieve a murder wouldn't jar you so long's you run no danger of getting found out. I really b'lieve—but don't you worry. We may set a tide-waiter adrift——"

"Of course, Mistair Clancy, they look into those things—adreeft in a good harbor."

"Be sure—in the best. Don't worry—we'll pick out a harbor with plenty of water when we turn 'em adrift. But strategy—strategy—that'll be lawful in this case."

"Of course, Mistair Clancy. And now a shake of the hand and one leet-le tush. I like that—one leet-le tush."

"Do you now? But nothing wonderful. You know what Shakespeare said, 'One touch of cassy makes the whole world kin.' He knew. They say that when Shake was in his prime he didn't do a thing to the old red stuff himself. Well, here's a shoot."

## III

After a time it came to the ears of the collector of customs at Good Hope that a smart-looking vessel with a French crew was doing illegal things in and about the more retired harbors and coves of the bay.

"Pooh, pooh," said the collector, when the matter was first brought to his attention—"pooh, pooh—I've been on those wild-goose chases before. Now, if it was an American vessel—one of those Gloucester fishermen—it might be different, though even they are beginning to have a care. There was Captain Bradley of the *Tubal Cain* only last week. He's got his lesson. But a Frenchman!—he wouldn't dare—pish, Harvey, pish."

Though the collector sniffed at the first word of these alleged illegal acts, yet he was brought gradually to believe in the truth of the rumors; and so, forsaking his slippers and his comfortable chair by the glowing grate, he got into his boots and went aboard the *Sleepless,* in which he was wont, when his periods of action were on, to cruise after smugglers and other enemies of the customs law.

A good little vessel was the *Sleepless,* of about sixty tons, schooner rigged and mounting two one-pounders on her forward deck. The collector came aboard, made known his wishes, and immediately retired to the cabin for a preparatory nap. Captain Harvey issued his orders, walked the quarter, and they were off on a hunt for the audacious Frenchman.

It was a most elusive craft they found themselves chasing. If there were people along shore who, making no profit out of the French vessel, went out of their way to volunteer enlightening information to the customs officers, there were also others who, having profited by her and hoping to profit again, went just as far out of their way to circulate mystifying reports of her. Between true and misleading reports, the collector spent some days in a baffling search.

But he caught up with her at last. In a retired back cove, into which the *Sleepless* seemed to find her way by accident, they stumbled on the Frenchman. There she was, lying at a rum-cask mooring, which plainly was arranged to be slipped in a twinkling; with all her lower sails standing, there was the Frenchman—*Marguerite* was the name disclosed by the glass—and even then her crew were dumping herring into the hold.

"Great Scott!" said the collector, "loaded to the scuppers. Bear down, Captain Harvey, and let them see our guns. We'll teach them."

"Ahoy"—he called out as the *Sleepless* approached—"ahoy—aboard the schooner."

A man with a great black beard, showing also a shock of black hair when he removed his cap to rub his forehead, came out of the cabin and answered, "Ahoy—vat ees it?"

"I'll tell you when I come aboard, you pirate." He came over in his dory, stepped over the rail, and approached the bewhiskered man. "Now, then, Mosseer, what are you doing here?"

"Vat?"

"Vat? Don't you vat me . What are you doing here, I say. At what port did you enter? Where are your papers? Let me see them. Don't you stand there and grin at me—get your papers. Do you understand?—your papers—pa-a-pers—pa-a-a-pers, do you understand? I am the Collector of Customs at Good Hope."

"I spik no Anglish, Your Highness."

"You don't? Does nobody speak English here?"

"Nobody? Oui, oui. One—ho—ho—Jane, attenday. Your Highness, Jane comes soon and spiks." The French skipper bowed low.

"Hah—Jane! Women aboard, you licentious pirate, with your big beard and gaudy red shirt and cap—Jane, hay?"

"Oui, oui—Jane—come queek, Jane. Oh—cord-ong blur—come queek. Hees Highness, he waits. Queek, Jane—queek."

"Oui, oui, mon capitaine—one mo-ment. Que voulez-vous—what weesh you, mon capitaine?" A voluble fellow was he who now bounced up out of the fo-c's'le and came running along the deck to the group on the quarter.

To him the collector turned. "So you're Jane, hay?"

"Oui, Your Highness, Jane—Jean—as you say. I am the cook."

"The cook, eh? Well, tell this captain of yours that I am the Collector of Customs at Good Hope—Wellington Spriggs, Collector of Customs, and I have reason to believe, good reason to believe, that he has not registered at any port in Newfoundland—that he has not paid the tonnage, and is therefore getting bait in defiance of the law—of the law—of the law of Newfoundland—in defiance of the law of Great Britain. Tell him that. Wait, tell him first I want to see his papers—that will settle it. If he has cleared in any of our ports he must have the collector's receipt for his tonnage tax, and he must have his ship's papers, anyway."

"Ah-h—pa-pairs. It ees the documents you weesh—ah-h. O yes. Mon capitaine—" the cook turned to his commander—"le gentilhomme—Hees Highness—veut voir—wish to see—les documents—the pa-pairs."

"Yes, his papers," broke in the collector, "and show them quick, tell him, or I'll take him into custody now—now. Do you hear?—now. I shall take him at once to Placentia and from there telegraph to Saint John's to have the cutter come and seize this vessel and put you all in jail—in jail, do you hear? Tell this pirate captain of yours with the whiskers—tell him that. Yes, I mean you"—he glared at the whiskered captain. "Don't you show your teeth at me."

Mr. Spriggs stamped his foot and shook his fist at the French captain, who drew himself up with great dignity. "Je ne comprong, sair—no understand, sair—" and to his cook, "Jane, queek, queek—vat says thees gentle-home—gentle-home—bah!"

"Il dit, mon capitaine, qu'il veut voir les documents—the pa-pairs."

"Vooly-he to see mon pa-pairs, Jane?"

"Oui, oui, mon capitaine."

"Direz-voo to heem, Jane—no. Non! Vouly-voo tang say mong coor, je vooz arm, blang mang, ploo belle, mong doo, quee-see-neer, cord-ong blur, cord-ong blur, sackray blur—sack-r-r-ay blur I say—whoop-ee—ein—zwei—drei—certain-mong—skaal, slainte, prosit—mong pa-pairs—ness pah, Jane?"

"Oui, oui, mon capitaine—oui, oui."

"Ah, ah, say to heem, Jane—say to the gentle-home, Jane—go to the dev-eel, go to the dev-eel, Jane—go to the dev-eel."

"What!" whooped the collector, "you tell me to go to the devil? To my face, too, you pirate—to my face!"

"Yes, sair—to your fass. You do not like? Then go to the hell, Mistair—Mistair—kell ay votre nom—cochon—peeg. Go to the deveel, sair—to the hell, I say—dam—dam."

"Oh-ho, that's it, is it? I'll soon have you fixed. You'll come with me to Placentia, and in short order, too. I'll telegraph to Saint John's for the cutter. I'd telegraph this minute if there was a station here. We shall see, we shall see, sir. In the morning we shall be in Placentia. Tell your captain, you—you, you interpreter—tell him we leave for Placentia at once—at once. I shall stay aboard to see that he goes there. I am now in charge of this schooner. My own schooner will go along with us. You understand, Frenchy? Compronnay voo?"

"Yes, sair." The cook turned to the captain and started to translate the collector's speech, but that impetuous character burst forth before the cook had finished, "Ha, je dee, it ees oon outrajh—oon out-r-r-a-a-jh."

"It is the law," returned the collector, majestically. "It is the law—the law of England—of Great Britain. To defy it is to defy the flag—the British Empire itself. Gc you"—he waved a hand to the men who had rowed him from the *Sleepless* to the *Marguerite*—"go you to the *Sleepless* and tell Captain Harvey to follow on behind. I stay aboard to see that no evidence is destroyed, and that my wishes are obeyed."

## IV

With Collector Spriggs on her quarter, arms folded, the *Marguerite* sailed out of Folly Cove. Clearing the point that jutted into the little bit of water running out of the cove, the *Marguerite's* captain, by the collector's direction, hauled up and laid her course for Placentia across the bay. Less than a cable's length astern followed the *Sleepless.* Standing on her afterdeck, Captain Harvey, the collector's right-hand man, followed every move of the French schooner.

"Placentia, sure enough," observed Captain Harvey to the man at the wheel. "We'll be there nicely in the morning. Yes, sir, even with this light breeze we'll be to Placentia in the morning."

The sun by this time was beginning to drop below the high hills astern, and the sails of the *Marguerite,* though she was not more than a cable's length ahead, had already begun to merge into the haze of a blue dusk. Captain Harvey, noting this, said: "I think we'd well to get up abreast of that fellow. We want to be able to see her lights, so's we can keep right close when it gets darker."

That was plainly the opinion of everybody aboard the *Sleepless,* but when it came to putting the plan into execution they found it was not so easy. The French schooner was drawing ahead.

"Who'd ever think a vessel loaded so deep could beat us in this light breeze, and her with only her lower sails on?"

"Seems to me I can make out her tops'l set," volunteered one of the crew.

"What? But maybe so, too. Maybe Mister Spriggs is getting impatient, but wouldn't you think he'd sing out to us first. First thing we know she'll be slipping away, and there they'll be in Placentia long before we are, maybe. I think we'd better get word to him. Drop the dory over, two of you, and row to him. It's a light breeze yet and you'll have no trouble ketching her. Go ahead and ask Mister Spriggs something about it—get more instructions."

Two men, putting off in the dory, were soon clear of their own vessel and gaining on the Frenchman. But they had yet half the distance to make when it began to breeze up a trifle.

Not much of a wind as yet, but enough to render futile the efforts of the men in the dory.

"She's leaving us," said one of them.

"She cert'nly is," rejoined the other.

"Yes, and it seems to me she's got her sheets eased off pretty free for a vessel going to Placentia. Don't it you?"

"I was thinking that, too—pretty well to the south she's heading. I think you'd better hail her."

"All right. Ahoy—Mis-ter Spriggs—a-ho-o-y there—the *Marguerite*. A-ho-o-y—Mis-ter Spriggs—a-ho-o-y—the *Marguer-i-i-te*."

No answer.

"Maybe they don't understand English. Can't you ahoy in French?"

"What is it in French?"

"I dunno, don't you?"

"No. But that cook they got ought to understand English."

"Yes, but maybe he's below getting supper or something."

"That's so. But Mister Spriggs oughter heard."

"Yes, but maybe he's below too, talking to the French captain."

"That's so, too. Well, let's hail him again."

Again they hailed, both of them, but no answer came back. They hailed a third time, and, still getting no answer, dropped back alongside the *Sleepless*, climbed aboard, and reported.

"H-m—" grunted Captain Harvey, "h-m—but that's funny. Do our sidelights show clear there forward?"

"Clear, sir," answered the watch.

"Clear, eh? H-m—— I'm sure I don't know what to make of it all. I don't understand her swinging off so far to the south'ard. Go into the fore-rigging, one or two of you, and hold her in sight's long as you can."

They tried to hold her in sight, but it was only a short time before they were unable to make out even the shadow of her sails. The captain of the *Sleepless*, thinking it over, came to the conclusion that his superior had some inexplicable reason for changing his course. At any rate he himself had his orders to take the *Sleepless* to the port of Placentia. Doubtless Mr. Spriggs would tell them all about it in the morning. Certainly he himself could do no more than abide events. At his usual hour, therefore, he might just as well turn in, which he did, and slept soundly. In the early morning he awoke refreshed, ascended to the deck and cast a cheerful look into the mists about him.

"No sight or sound of her?" he queried of the man at the wheel.

"No, sir."

"That's queer, now. But, no it ain't, either. If she's been ahead of us all night, she's probably in the harbor now. Let's see. We'll be in there ourselves in another half-hour and then we'll see her, if we haven't passed her in the night. None of the watch didn't report passing any sail in the night, did they?"

"No, sir."

"Oh, well. Soon's we're in the harbor and it comes light we'll see."

They made the harbor and in due time the sun arose and it became broad light. The captain and the crew of the *Sleepless* gazed ahead. No Frenchman there certainly. Nor behind, no—nor to either side. They went ashore, climbed the highest eminence on the near-by hills and gazed afar. No Frenchman. "It's queer now, ain't it?" said the captain of the *Sleepless*.

During that day the crew of the *Sleepless* kept unceasing watch. During the night that followed they also kept watch. Through all the next day they stood expectant, and throughout the long night that followed their vigilance never slackened. At any moment the Frenchman might come in with their chief aboard. Daybreak found them still standing watch. But the Frenchman came not, nor any word of her.

On the morning of this day, the third day of his chief's mysterious absence, the captain of the *Sleepless* began to have the gravest kind of doubts. Suppose the Frenchman had gone astray? Just where she might have strayed to Captain Harvey could not clearly state. He was puzzled. He was not a morbidly imaginative man, but he was beginning to have an idea by this time that something had happened to Mr. Spriggs.

He telegraphed to half a dozen places in the bay and waited patiently the entire forenoon for the answers. He even telegraphed to Saint John's. "Maybe he took her to Saint John's," Captain Harvey had said to the telegraph operator—the whole port was in his confidence now. "You can't always tell about Mister Spriggs. Sometimes he's as deep as that five-mile hole out in the Atlantic. Maybe he took her to Saint John's. You can't tell, can you?"

The operator agreed that a man never could tell and suggested a telegram of inquiry to Saint John's. The mate also said you couldn't always tell about Mister Spriggs. "Maybe he's at Saint John's—straight to headquarters. The Lord knows he's gone long enough."

To these two Captain Harvey listened hopefully, and so it came that he telegraphed to Saint John's. But from there as elsewhere it was always the same reply—"No word of Collector Spriggs of Good Hope, nor of a strange vessel loaded with herring and hailing from Saint Pierre, American built and with a French crew—no word."

Then Captain Harvey cleared his decks for action. He started on a cruise for the Frenchman. During what was left of that day, through all of that night, through all the next day and all the night after, he hunted Placentia Bay from Good Hope to the port of Placentia and back again. He held up everything that hove in sight—dories, skiffs, jacks, American fishermen and coast steamers. Had they seen Mister Spriggs, Collector of Customs of Good Hope, or an American-built vessel, Gloucester model, with a French crew aboard—her skipper a man with a lot of black hair and black beard and a red shirt and red cap, who could talk a little broken English?

No, they hadn't—no vessel of that model with a skipper with that queer kind of rigging. In despair Captain Harvey put for home. "We've done our best," said he, "we've done our best. All we can do now, so far's I c'n see, is to lay our course for Good Hope and break it to his family."

## V

The *Sleepless*, returning from her unsuccessful cruise after Collector Spriggs, and with her crew decidedly perplexed, was about to round the northern point of the entrance to the harbor of Good Hope, when into view, from around the southern point, came an American fisherman, which, Captain Harvey soon saw, desired to speak him.

"Good Lord!" he ejaculated, while the two vessels were yet quite a little distance apart, "if that ain't Mister Spriggs standing there forward!—see him?"

At sight of their chief the men of the *Sleepless* marveled with their captain. They did not cheer—Mr. Spriggs was not the kind of man at sight of whom subordinates rose up and cheered—but they were glad to see him now. His reappearance relieved a great suspense, and the explanation that he would doubtless make promised to solve a most puzzling mystery.

The collector, with solemn port, stepped aboard his own vessel. He was followed over the rail by an able-looking man with a red cap on his head, a lump on his temple, and two bottles of wine under his arm. The crew of the *Sleepless* had never to their knowledge seen this big man before, but they knew him for an American despite that red cap, which was plainly of Saint Pierre make.

"Mister Clancy," said Collector Spriggs, turning to the stranger, "let me introduce Captain Harvey—Captain Harvey, Mister Clancy."

"Glad to know you, Captain. When'd you get in?" said Mr. Clancy gravely.

"Just arrived," answered Captain Harvey.

"And my crew, Mister Clancy." The collector waved an arm that included the whole deck.

"Glad to know you." Mr. Clancy genially waved an arm—the free arm—that also embraced the whole deck.

"Mister Clancy saved my life," said the collector, in the tone of an orator before an audience. "If it were not for Mister Clancy I would now be on the bottom off Galantry Head in seventy-five fathoms of water. Wouldn't I, Mister Clancy?"

"Seventy-two, if the charts are right," replied Mr. Clancy.

"Hard and fast on a rock the vessel went, with the waves breaking over her. It was terrible, wasn't it, Mister Clancy?"

"Awful."

"Dreadful—w-h-h—— A man could hardly have a narrower escape and live to go home and tell the tale. They can't imagine the danger, can they, Mister Clancy? Appalling, wasn't it?"

"Appalling? Lord, yes—desp'rate. It was looking like life insurance gone over the rail—that's what it was."

"Even Mister Clancy's iron nerve was shaken, Captain. It was enough to scare any man, wasn't it?" continued the collector.

"Enough to scare? Great Lord, I thought I'd die of fright. My hair rose on end."

"There! Harvey, that may give you an idea of it. But come below with us, Captain, and you'll hear the whole story. First, however, put the *Sleepless* on her way to Captain Joshua Bradley's vessel, the *Tubal Cain*. Where is she now, Captain?"

"Passed her early this morning on the way here. She's about a dozen miles up the bay taking in herring," answered Harvey. To the man at the wheel he gave the course, then dropped down into the cabin, where he found Clancy, who, with one of the bottles that he had brought aboard placed carefully on the locker beside him, was holding the other firmly by the neck and looking about him with the question: "You haven't got a corkscrew handy, Collector, have you?"

"Wait—wait—" said the collector. "This is on me. I have some stuff here that I know you will appreciate." He lifted a hatch in the cabin floor, and from down in the run passed up a bottle of wine. "There—sh-h—don't let the crew hear us."

"What's it?" whispered Clancy—"cassy, too? My, but you're a fox. No duty, I'll bet. Come now, duty or no duty?"

The collector laid a finger beside his nose. "There's a fellow over in Saint Pierre named Biller—but don't you let on——"

"M-m—" Clancy slid nearer. "M-m— I comprong, as they say in Saint Peer."

"Ah-a—you compronnay—we both compronnay—don't we, eh?" The collector dug an elbow into Clancy's ribs. "Well, Biller and myself understand each other—understand each other. Compronnay-voo?"

"Collector," said Clancy, "but you're a fox. And to look at you, who'd ever think it—and you polley the French like a native."

"Ha-ha—" chuckled the collector.

"You cert'nly are a fox. Now what chance has a poor thick fisherman like myself got against the likes o' you. Lord, I remember when I came down here in a vessel of my own twelve year ago, how near I came to gettin' seized for a couple of little ten-gallon kegs of red rum and a few cases of cassy that somebody said I was trying to smuggle in and you coming after me. Now, I never was trying to get anything through without paying duty. Lord, I know better than try to get ahead of you, Collector. 'Tommie,' I says to myself—by way of good advice, d'y' see?—'Tommie,' I says, 'don't you be advised by men like Billie Simms and Tom O'Donnell and Saul Elwell and that kind. Don't you,' I says to myself, 'for if Collector Spriggs ever gets after you, it's all over.' Mind that time, Collector?"

"Don't I? And I notice you never did get caught trying it again."

"No, nor I didn't get caught that time, either. Why? Because I didn't have any to ketch. I leave that kind of work to them that thinks they're smart, which I ain't. No, sir, I admit I ain't. But I say"—Clancy gazed solicitously about him——"you haven't got a mug to pour this cassy into, have you, Collector?"

"Yes, I have. Here you are. No, after you."

"You, Captain Harvey?" Clancy pushed over the mug.

"No, after you, Mister Clancy."

"Well, if you both insist. M-m—but just the smell of it's good. Here's a shoot."

The collector then took a drink and Captain Harvey took a drink and the collector started to tell the story of his cruise on the *Marguerite,* so that Captain Harvey might know how it was.

"After I got aboard the Frenchman up there in Folly Cove," he began, "everything was all right for a time till that French captain—maybe you didn't get a good look at him, Harvey—the big fellow with all the whiskers and the lot of hair and the red shirt and red cap like Mister Clancy's——"

"It's the same cap, Collector—remember?" interposed Clancy.

"That the Frenchman's cap? How is that?" inquired Harvey.

"Wait, Harvey, wait. We'll come to that. Let me tell it."

"Yes, Captain, let the collector tell it—and he's the man to tell a story proper, let me tell you. Go on, Collector. But before you start, s'pose we have a little touch—just a little touch of cassy. Nothing like a little wine to aid the memory and assist the imagination. Now, then, a little touch, eh?"

"Well, just a little, thank you," said the collector. "And just a little, thank you," said Harvey.

"And Mister Clancy—just a little, thank you," said that able seaman softly to himself, and slid it smoothly down.

"Well, after I was aboard a little while," resumed the collector, "that big captain—he was a big fellow, wasn't he, Mister Clancy?"

"Big? My soul, yes—a whale."

"'Bout your height and weight, wasn't he, Mister Clancy?" ventured Captain Harvey, as one who observes things.

"Mister Clancy's height and weight!—— Great Scott, Harvey, where were your eyes? As big again as you, wasn't he, Mister Clancy?"

"As big again? Lord, yes, and twice as big again. A reg'lar whale, we're telling you, Captain. I don't guess you had a good look at him, Captain."

"No, maybe I didn't. No, I don't think I did, come to think of it now," interposed Harvey hastily.

"No, I don't think you did," commented the collector severely.

"No, maybe I didn't," admitted Harvey. "But where did Mister Clancy come in?" His forehead was wrinkling under the mental strain.

"Now, Harvey, let me tell it and you'll see where Mister Clancy comes in."

"Yes, Captain, you let the collector tell it and you'll see. I come in later—like Jack Harkaway we used to read about when we was young. In the nick o' time I come. Bing—bing—my trusty revolver cracks out and two redskins bite the dust. Go ahead, Collector—smoke up."

"Well, that big captain motions to me——"

"—in French, was it, Collector?—make it plain to Captain Harvey, you know."

"Yes, in—no, he just motions first and then he says——"

"—in French?"

"Yes. 'Permittay-mwaw,' meaning 'Allow me' or 'Come with me,' the way they say it in French. He meant, 'Allow me to escort you to the cabin'—French style, you know. So we went below and he produces a bottle."

"Cassy, Collector? Make it all clear to Captain Harvey."

"Cassy, yes—and says——"

"Ah, Collector, I know what he said, I'll bet." Clancy leaned genially toward Spriggs. "Come now, will you take me? I'll bet I know. He said, 'Have a little tush?' There, that's what he said, wasn't it? Ain't I right? Of course. And so long as it's on our minds, suppose we have a little touch—just one little touch." Clancy filled a mug for the collector, who took his drink like a man mesmerized, as also did Harvey. Clancy himself took one that drained the bottle, which he then rolled under the stove. "There's one dead. Go on, Collector—drive her."

"Well, to be sociable, you see, I took a drink—a small drink. And he took a drink—an enormous drink. We had a few more, four or five, maybe, I taking moderate drinks and he taking much larger ones. I foresaw that at the rate he was then going he would soon have more than was good for him, but I did not foresee how he would act when he got under the influence. It was about this time I thought I heard a creaking as if they were hoisting sails and paying out sheets, but I wasn't quite sure. However, no matter about that, the big French captain kept getting drunker and drunker. He got so drunk at last that he finally insisted on waltzing with me. Well, I know, you understand, we couldn't do much waltzing in a fisherman's cabin—and a stove in the middle of the floor too. But, merely to humor him, of course, I pretended to waltz with him, and we waltzed till we knocked the stove over."

"Oon, doo, traw,
Balance like mwaw,"

hummed Clancy.

"What's that?" exclaimed the collector, gazing at Clancy in surprise. "How'd you know that?"

"How? Don't you mind me being in the hold jammed up against the cabin bulkhead? Don't you mind me telling you about that coming over in Billie Simms's vessel?"

"That's so. I forgot that."

"What's that?" asked Captain Harvey. "Mister Clancy aboard the Frenchman?"

"Now, Harvey," rejoined the collector, "if you'll compel yourself to listen, maybe I'll get through with my story."

"Hush, Captain, hush," said Clancy. "Let the collector tell it. And if Captain Harvey speaks again, Collector, I'll gag him. Your wheel, Collector, and drive her."

"Well, when the stove went over, the ashes fell out and scattered all over the floor, and that seemed to make the French captain mad all at once. He began to swear frightfully in his own language, and I, seeing that trouble might ensue, started to go up on deck. It was my idea, you see, to call out to you on the *Sleepless* to come aboard with your crew. But he anticipated me. I think now that he was too cunning to allow me to do that, in spite of the liquor that was in him. At any rate he got to the companionway before me and said something to the man at the wheel—no, he didn't say—he motioned, and they drew the slide over the companionway tight. That made it pretty dark in the cabin. You may remember it was nearly night when I went aboard. Now, with the cabin dark, I began to think that this fellow, not being able to see very well, would forget all about me, perhaps fall asleep and let me go to sleep, too, for I was beginning to feel drowsy.

"But, no. He was cunning, as they say mad men are quite frequently in their frenzies. He lit the binnacle lamp and then the cabin lamp and started to look around for me. I was in the port after bunk by this time, up beneath the overhang, and I thought he wouldn't notice me, but he did. 'A-ha-a—' he began, and mark the fiendish cruelty of the monster to use his few English words so as make me the better understand his awful intentions. 'I keel you, I keel you.' Just to hear him say that, in the way he said it—it would freeze any man's blood just to hear him. He went over to a locker on the other side of the cabin, and, lifting the cover, began to rummage around. 'I get axe and keel heem—the dam Anglishman—' he kept muttering to himself. I don't think he intended me to hear those words about the axe, but I did—my ears are sharp. I saw the horrible doom that was awaiting me, for I knew that I didn't have one chance in a thousand with that inhuman monster. But even then I kept my wits about me and looked around for a chance to escape. I saw the door of the lazaretto wide open—almost beside my bunk it was—and so, while he was hunting in his drunken way for the axe, I slipped out of the bunk and into the lazaretto, took the key out the door, drew the door to after me—noiselessly—and locked it. It was lucky for me that the lazaretto locked that way. I found a coil of rope inside and rolled it against the door and then braced myself against the rope. Then I heard the big brute lumbering back and groping in the bunk for me. 'Where you—where you—come out here, sair——' I could hear him plain's could be. 'Come out here, sair—you dam Anglishman—come out here, sair, for I keel you—come out.' Well, I heard him groping about for a long time before it seemed to occur to him that I wasn't in the bunk. I began to get a chill then, expecting every minute to hear the axe come crashing through the lazaretto door. But it didn't. It strikes me now that it was a peculiar thing that he never happened to think that I might be inside the lazaretto. But it is a fact that it didn't seem to occur to him. But he began to feel in all the other bunks for me. I could hear him plainly even with the door of the lazaretto locked. Well, he didn't find me in any of the other bunks, of course, and lumbering around the cabin, probably very much puzzled by my sudden disappearance, he must have stumbled against the cabin steps and thereby got an idea in his head. Anyway, as if it had just occurred to him, he muttered, 'A-ha—he go on the deck—oop on the deck he go and lock me down here—ah, dam Anglishman.' He began to holler then—to the man at the wheel, I imagine—'Henri, Henri—' till the slide over the companionway was pushed back. Then I could hear his heavy feet pounding the deck over my head and his curses and the stumbling of his big boots as he went forward.

"Well, I was somewhat worried, I admit it now. Naturally anyone would be, but I never lost my head. Though I saw no more of the French captain—I heard him though, as I will tell you later—I made up my mind that I was not out of danger by any means, and I stuck to my hiding-place. All that long night, wide awake, I lay in the lazaretto. They kept coming and going in the cabin. I was wondering all the time how the crew accounted for my disappearance, but a remark dropped by one of them enlightened me. One of them said—and judging by the way their voices came to me they must have been sitting around the stove at the time—'I see not Mistair Spriggs,' said he. 'Ho, ho,' says another, 'le capitaine put heem under the floor, so—s-q-q-wik—' I shuddered. He meant to imply that the captain had cut my throat and stowed my dead body down in the run. That may give you an idea, Captain Harvey, of the kind of a man the big French captain was and of the kind of a crew he had. He was a—what was it you called him, Captain Clancy, in Captain Simms's cabin when we were coming over?"

"Blue-beard?" suggested Clancy.

"That's it—Blue-beard. That's just the name for him."

"But wasn't you feeling hungry all the time?" queried Captain Harvey.

"After the first day and night, yes. But I'll tell you how fortunate I was about food. At night they were in the habit of bringing food and wine back in the cabin to eat before turning in. They always brought more than they could eat, you see, and after they were asleep and the lamp turned low I would steal out and get some of what was left on the lockers—bread, cheese, sardines and wine. They never noticed mornings that any of their food was gone.

"Well, things went along so until the third night. It was well after midnight but yet far from morning, as I have since estimated, when I was awakened by an awful stamping on the deck over my head, and the rudder post behind me beginning to creak and the vessel to heel over. I was directly under the wheel, you see. Well, I couldn't swear to what they were saying very well, for they were shouting in French, with only a word or so in English occasionally, but I could make out the big captain's voice every now and then—'twas he, I think, was speaking the English words. Whatever it was, it didn't last long. Two or three of them seemed to be coming aft on the run, and then there was a sudden flurry, and blows and curses and bodies falling. 'They're killing somebody,' I said to myself. I was still wondering what it was all about, when all at once the vessel shoved up forward and the bottom planks were scraping the rocks. She lifted once, twice, again and again—began to pound—and then the water began to come through her. I could hear it—I could feel it—it was swashing on the cabin floor. Instantly I realized my danger and jumped for the lazaretto door, and was about to turn the key and get out and take chances with the big captain even rather than stay there and drown like a rat, when I heard somebody drop down the companionway and swash around in the water that was pouring into the cabin. I heard a voice—it was the voice of the big Captain. I don't know what he said, but I knew his voice. And then I heard him approaching—swash—swash—swash—— 'He has found me out and is coming to finish me,' I thought. I heard his hand on the door. 'Open, open,' he called. 'No,' I said. 'Open,' he said again. 'No,' I said determinedly, and then—crash—crash—'I'm gone,' I said to myself. One more crash and the door gave way, a big boot followed the door, and then—the head of Mister Clancy!"

"No!" ejaculated Harvey.

"Yes. You it was, wasn't it, Mister Clancy?" appealed the collector.

"Yes, sir—me—Jack Harkaway—in the nick o' time—just like I told you would happen, Captain. Yes, sir, me, and in the nick o' time. And when I come to think of it now, I must say that I think it is worth having a little touch on. We'll open one of mine now. Yes, yes, Collector, one of mine. What do you say now? A little touch, eh? Just a wee little touch. Why, of course. There you are, throw that into your forehold and tell me if you don't feel better."

## VI

"And now, Harvey," said the collector when they all had had a little touch, "Mister Clancy will tell the rest, so that you may know how it all came out."

"Yes," said Clancy, carefully setting the newly opened bottle on end again, "I will clear up the mystery. First, I must tell you, Captain, that all the time Mister Spriggs was under the overhang, a prisoner, as you might say, I was in the after-hold —a prisoner, too. You see, I'd stolen aboard the *Marguerite* one night when she was in Saint Peer Harbor. I'd been having what you might call a little wine-time ashore and my vessel had sailed without me. That's the vessel we're heading for now, By the way, oughtn't we be getting near it, Captain?"

"I've told 'em on deck to tell us when we're there," said Harvey.

"Good. But I'd better make a short story of it anyway. Lemme see, where was I? Oh, yes, stowin' myself aboard the *Marguerite* at the dock in Saint Peer Harbor. Well, I'd climbed aboard and while I was stepping high, so's not to wake anybody that might be having a kink in his bunk below, I stepped over the after-hatch combing and into the hold. She's got a deep hold, by the way, the *Marguerite* has for a vessel her size, but why people leave hatches off at night I don't know. I hit something hard down near her bottom somewhere. Just what it was I don't know, but——"

"Her ballast, maybe," suggested Harvey.

"Maybe—or her chain anchor. Anyway, what it was don't matter. I know it warn't lemon jelly. I went down and out, and when I came to again the vessel was moving and I was tied hand and foot and a gag in my mouth. Of course, being fixed like that I couldn't say much, even if I had anything to say, which I don't think I did, being still maybe a little bit foggy about things. To tell you the truth, I think now that I thought then that I was still asleep and that when I woke up I'd found myself back in the Caffy Middy with the waiter girl bringing on another round of cassy.

"Well, by and by a man came along with a lantern and takes the gag out of my mouth and puts some grub alongside me and a cup of coffee, and says, 'Who you?—who you?' just like that, savage-like, 'Who you?'—kinder weak on English, y'see."

"French?" suggested Harvey.

"Man, but you do ketch on to things," said Clancy, admiringly. "That's it, French. I didn't answer, and he says again, 'Who you? 'Merican, Anglish or vat?' Then I said I was American—Gloucester fisherman. He says, 'Oh!' Well, sir, that's all the talk we had day in and day out—him coming down, taking the gag out of my mouth and feeding me three times a day for I don't know how many days. Ten days I think it must've been—no more talk than that till the night you came aboard, Mister Spriggs. Then another fellow comes down, this one a lad that could talk almost as good English as myself—could talk it as fast anyway—a big, husky, black-skinned fellow—the cook he was, near's I could make out."

"H-m—— I know him," broke in Harvey; "black fellow, big and heavy—the interpreter the time you boarded the *Marguerite,* Mister Spriggs—don't you remember, Mister Spriggs?"

"Yes, it was the cook, Harvey," said the collector. "Captain Simms and Mister Clancy and myself decided that point to our satisfaction on the way over from Saint Pierre this morning. It was the cook. Proceed, Mister Clancy."

"Well, the cook he comes down this night and says, 'Remembair'—do you mind how he used to put those 'airs' in, Collector—'remembair,' he says, and I can tell you, Captain, he was a villainous looking gazabo, and the Collector can tell you too."

"If ever a man had murder in his eyes, Harvey, he was the man," affirmed the collector.

"Collector, you've certainly got him right. It's just as you say. If ever a man had murder in his eye, he was the man. A proper man for a murderer, and the more I think of it, Collector, the more I can't help thinking that it was all a plot now from the start. You see, with you out of the way, they could do all the smuggling they wanted in Placentia Bay."

"Woo-o," shivered the collector.

"Yes, and with you out of the way, where would the British gover'ment be? Now, now, Collector, I know. I know what all the American fishermen say. 'He's a dog,' they say. 'He's a killer in his line—you can't get around Collector Spriggs of Good Hope. No, sir.' Of course, I'm not saying they don't cuss you out pretty often. That's nacheral, and you being a man that knows human nature can hardly blame them for that, now, could you? Could you, now? Be honest now, could you blame our skippers for cussing you out when you get ahead of them so often—could you, now?"

"Well, I can't say as I could. It is a very natural feeling, Mister Clancy."

"Nacheral? It's as nacheral as wanting to take a drink when you're thirsty. Well, to go back, Captain Harvey. This cook this night—the night the Collector came aboard—he says going away, 'Remembair—vat happens on thees sheep you do not know—you do not hear—you do not see. Remembair—say notting, or you are as a dead mans. You say notting, hein—hein'—with his face up to mine, and me with a gag between my jaws.

"Of course, I said nothing. A man with half a wet towel in his mouth don't generally have too much to say. I only just rocked my head like one of them East India idols that bows fore and aft as you put a finger to 'em, and the cook he goes away. I mind that night well, for that was the first night I began to see what tough people I was up against. That was the night, Collector, the French captain nigh did for you in the cabin."

"Woo-o—" shuddered the Collector, "wasn't it awful?"

"Awful? I should say. Iron nerves you must have, Collector, to be able to sit there now and listen to me telling it."

"My friends say my nerve is good," admitted the Collector.

"It cert'nly must be. Do you remember him waltzing around the cabin with you, him going——

'Oon—doo—traw—
Balance like mwaw.
You are a daisy
But you have your faults.
Your right foot is lazy,
Your left foot is crazy,
But don't be un-ais-y
I'll tache you to waltz.'"

"Was that what he was saying all the time?" broke in the collector, like a man on whom a mysterious truth has just dawned. "Are you sure?"

"Sure as c'n be. I was tied up in the afterhold and gagged, but my ears were free and I could hear him through the bulkhead. And I could see you both after a while through a little knot-hole I could just reach to look through. Man, but the crust of him! whirlin' you around to that kind of stuff and trying to sing it in English with an Irish brogue—the crust of him—the Irish brogue!"

"It was impudent, now I come to think of it."

"Impudent? It was real sassy. Anyway, the second night after that the cook comes to me again and this time—you must mind, Captain, I told the collector this on board Billie Simms's vessel on the way over—this was the time, Captain, he wanted me to do the awful thing. You'd never guess, Captain Harvey, what he wanted me to do."

"What was it?" inquired Harvey in a whisper.

"He wanted me to kill the French captain."

"No!"

"Yes."

"What—murder him?"

"I s'pose that's what he meant. 'Keel heem,' he said."

"What awful people those Frenchmen!" ejaculated Harvey.

"Aren't they?"

"And what did you say to that, Mister Clancy?"

"I said, 'Nev-air, nev-air,' giving it to him in his own kind of talk, y'see."

"And what did he say?"

"Nothing, but just fetched me one with the back end of an axe on the side of the temple. See that lump? Well, that's where the axe bounced off."

"Good heavens! A wonder you were not killed!"

"Warn't it? But you see he didn't hit me hard enough. He only just let the weight of the axe drop just over my right eye. You've seen a blacksmith, now, haven't you, Captain, let his hammer drop on the anvil—not pounding like he was hammering horseshoes into shape, but just a little light crack in between the real blows—maybe to illustrate an argument he's having with the loafers hanging 'round the shop, or maybe only to hear the old anvil ring. It's a cheerful sound, ain't it, the ringing of the hammer on the anvil? Did you ever recite in school—

> Oh, listen to the clanging of the hammer on the anvil—

Goes fine, don't it? Well, this blacksmith of a cook just let the back end of his axe clang on my temple—just let it bounce off once or twice, so I'd remember not to forget. And I didn't."

At this point Clancy was interrupted by the voice of one of the crew. "Captain Harvey, we're getting close to the *Tubal Cain.*"

"All right," answered Harvey up the companionway. "Put over the dory, and have it ready. Go on, Mister Clancy."

"Lemme see, where was I?"

"He'd just hit you on the forehead with an axe."

"Oh, yes. But ain't it most time for a little touch? Can't stop? All right, just as you say, Captain. Well, that little tap threw me into what, if I was a lady, you might call a swoon. I'd been in a swoon yet, maybe, but I was awakened by a hollerin' and shoutin' and stampin' and cursin' on deck, and then the vessel laid over like she was being put by the wind, and then we heard her grinding upon the rocks—grinding—grinding she went. Somebody or other was thrown over the side—I heard him splash. Then the water came up through her bottom where the planks was gone and then over her rail and deck amidships and down the hatch. Well, I began to think that with the water rushing down there like that the hold was no place for me, and I got up and climbed out."

"Climbed out?" ejaculated Captain Harvey. "But wasn't you tied?"

"Eh—what!"—it was Collector Spriggs speaking now, startled into sudden action by Captain Harvey's question. "That's so. Were you not tied, Mister Clancy?"

"Now, Captain—now, Collector—wait and let me tell it. I'll have to hurry, won't I, if we're so handy as your man said to my vessel? He said we was most alongside, didn't he? Here, before we go, just a little touch to finish up this bottle. Now, Collector, just a little touch. It'll never hurt you in the world; nor you, Captain. There you are—throw that in—there, now, don't you feel better already? Come, now, don't you? Of course you do. Where was I? Oh, yes—the vessel upon the rocks and men fightin' on the deck and the sea pourin' into her hold. When I got on deck, there was the crew of the Frenchman goin' off in the dory—I c'd just see them in the dark. And there was a man's body just driftin' by her rail amidships, with a red cap with tassels on it. It kind of groaned—the body did—and I made a grab for it, but the tide carried it by and I only caught the red cap, and that came off. I was bareheaded myself, so I put the cap on my own head—this cap I'm wearing now."

"And that's how you come to be wearing the French captain's cap? I was wondering how you got it. So he's dead?"

"Yes, Captain Harvey, he's dead."

"And a good job," injected the collector, "a good job. Go on, Mister Clancy, and tell Harvey how near I came to being drowned in the wreck of the *Marguerite*."

"Oh, yes, that was the exciting part. There was a dory astern, and I was going to jump into that and try to pick up the French captain, when I happened to think of Mister Spriggs being down under the overhang—maybe locked in and not able to get out. 'Charity begins at home,' thinks I, and I jumps below and tells him what's happened, and we jumps in the dory and rows up Saint Peer Harbor till we spy Billie Simms's vessel, and he takes us to Good Hope, where we meets with you, and there you are."

"Yes, Harvey, there you are. It happened just as Mister Clancy tells it. Was it not wonderful, and did I not have a narrow escape, Harvey?"

"Most miraculous," commented Harvey. "And the French captain is dead?"

"Dead, yes, and a good thing," answered Collector Spriggs, "for if ever a brute sailed the sea he was one. Just think how he would have made way with me—killed me with the axe in the cabin!"

"Oon—doo—traw—
Balance like mwaw—"

hummed Clancy absently.

"Mister Clancy, I wish you would not sing that," observed Spriggs.

"Oh, all right, Collector, only I was thinking to myself how lucky you were."

"Lucky indeed. Where would I be now only I had the wit to think of getting under the overhang and stay there?"

"That's right, Collector. You cert'nly stood by the overhang in good shape. When I came down after she'd gone up on the rocks I thought for a minute we'd both be drowned there—between stopping to break in the door and rescuin' them two bottles o' cassy. But that's past now. We made it, didn't we, Collector? Up the cabin steps, and the deck sinking under our feet. Over the rail and into the dory with us, and then the lucky thing—finding Billie Simms to take us over, which reminds me we need a little touch, now the story's ended. Where's that bottle? O Lord, empty! Two dead"—he kicked it under the stove—"I've half a mind to open this one. No, I'll keep it for Captain Josh. Well, I'm off. It's a shame to hurry away from you, Collector, and from you, Captain, with your entertaining ways, but I know you both want to get back to Good Hope. So good-by. Good-by, good luck."

Clancy leaped up the cabin-steps and onto the deck. In four strides he was in her waist. "Where's that dory? Oh, yes"—he dove over the rail and into the dory. "Good-by—good-by"—he waved his last bottle of cassis back to Spriggs and Harvey who had just reached the deck—"I'll see you at Good Hope on the way back to Gloucester. So long, and now, fellers"—he beamed on the two men who were rowing—"drive her, fellows, drive her, for

My captain calls and I must go,
So, brothers, row, row, row.
I'll hang my harp on a weeping willow tree,
I'll take my blooming kit and go, go, go."

Clancy's tuneful, if somewhat husky, voice floated back to Collector Spriggs and Captain Harvey as they stood by the rail of the *Sleepless* and watched the dory flying toward the *Tubal Cain*..

"Now, was it not all wonderful, Harvey?" again inquired the Collector.

"Yes, sir. You were lucky, Mister Spriggs."

"Wasn't I? Captain Simms, after hearing the story on the way over here in his vessel, said it was almost incredible. He said if he hadn't known Mister Clancy, known him personally and by reputation, he would not have known what to make of it—no, he wouldn't," he said.

"It was wonderful, Mister Spriggs. But what puzzles me is how Mister Clancy got loose in the hold when he was tied up so tight. I meant to've asked him—I did ask him, now that I think of it, but he forgot to answer."

"So he did, didn't he? I meant to ask him that, too. I will when I see him again. But that French captain is dead, Harvey. I'd hardly believe it only that Mister Clancy is in possession of his red cap. I know the cap. That's one good thing, Harvey—the French captain."

"Yes, it's good he's gone. But I wonder how Mister Clancy ever got loose in the hold after he was tied up so tight and gagged. I wish he hadn't forgotten to explain that."

"Oh, he'll explain that when we see him next time," said the Collector, reassuringly. "You don't know Mister Clancy as I know him. He's one of those simple, appreciative men that you can't but like after you get to know him. He thinks there's nobody like me."

## VII

Captain Joshua Bradley was perplexedly overhauling some bills and receipts in the cabin of the *Tubal Cain* when he heard the scraping of boot-heels on deck.

"H-m—that's him." Captain Joshua had hardly grunted that when Clancy, cheerful and smiling, dropped down the companionway.

One or two things had gone wrong with Captain Joshua, and so he found it easy to meet his returned scapegrace with a face that was screwed up to express what might be considered a proper degree of righteous reprobation.

"By the Lord, Skipper," greeted Clancy, beamingly, "but I'm glad to see you. When'd you get in?"

"When'd I get in? Go to—Halifax with you. How came you to be in the Collector's vessel? Oh, never mind how I know. I s'pose you think it all right to be messing with a man that fined me a couple of hundred dollars and threatened to seize my vessel, too—the thick-headed, feathery, cacklin' old hen."

"Sh-h—Skipper. Wait now till I tell you. I've got one on the Collector. He seized my vessel, too."

"Your vessel! What in the name o' Tophet are you talking about?—your vessel!"

"My vessel, yes, sir. You don't know. Of course you don't know. How could you—but—

'Jer swee le capitaine de la *Marguerite*,
De la *Marguerite*, de la *Marguerite*—
Jer swee le capitaine de la *Marguerite*,
My *Marguerite* so belle'—

"Oh, but wait now and let me tell you. And we'll open this bottle of cassy while we're waiting. Just a second now and we'll have a little touch—just you and me, Skipper."

Clancy seized a pair of woolen stockings that were lying by the fire and crowding them into the hollow heel of the bottle began the muscular operation of jolting the cork out of the bottle. He never ceased to talk during all the time he was doing it. "Now let me tell you—in a minute I'll have this cork loose—best cassy in Saint Peer. Wait till you get a whiff and I'll bet you'll be saying so, too. If you'd be gettin' a mug ready—of course you've got a mug handy, Skipper? In your stateroom, of course. Ought to knowed. There, try that for a throat gargle. Ain't it all right? What? You bet. Oh, no, I don't know a thing about cassy wine. Oh, no, not a thing! Well, when you put out of Saint Peer that morning abandoning me like——"

"Abandoning you? Why, you son of Ananias, I sent two men up after you and they nearly raised the roof off Caffy Middy till Biller told 'em they'd have to stop making so much noise——"

"Biller?"

"Yes, Biller—the man I bought my rum off that was afterward seized by old Spriggs. And who ever told old Spriggs I don't know, but if he'd been told by Biller he couldn't have been more prompt."

"He was."

"Was what?"

"Told by Biller. Sh-h—Captain Josh, abate thy wrath, righteous though it be, and I'll tell you how I fixed Biller. But first finish that up and let's have another little touch. Saved this bottle for you out the wreck. Came near losing old man Spriggs to rescue it for you."

"What wreck?"

"Oh, we were in a wreck—me and old man Spriggs—and I hauled him out. He was down under the overhang ossified with——"

"What! Old Spriggs drunk?"

"No, no. Fright. He'd got over his drunk."

"And you saved him? Why in the name of David didn't you let him drown?—the old granny."

"Well, I s'pose 'twouldn't be an awful loss to the world. But as 'twas owin' to me he was there in the first place—and there was his family. Well, anyway—but drink that up and let's have another. What do you say now, Skipper—another little touch. Who was the prophet in the Good Book that said: 'A little wine for thy stomach's sake'? You mustn't go back on the Good Book, you know. No, sir, not on the Good Book. Come now, another little touch?"

"Well, just a little. M-m—by gosh, but that's good cassy, Tommie."

"Ain't it now? Trust me—saved from the wreck for you, Skipper—for you, mind. Well, to go back. When I came to in the Caffy Middy, the first man I met was Biller."

"I hope you punched him?"

"Hoped I punched him, Captain Josh, Captain Josh, think of the Bible lessons of your youth. Not as I blame you much, though, come to think. Maybe if I knew as much then as I do now, I'd've soaked him good and proper and taken a chance with the Johnny Darmes. Well, I first thought of going back to Halifax, but I had only half passage. So me and Biller cut cards to see if I'd have enough for my passage or nothing at all. I won and then won again, making me in ten dollars. That was passage and drink money over, but I began to think I'd like to go in style. Yes, I thought I might just as well go saloon, and when Biller says, 'Twenty or nothing?' I says, 'All right.' We cut—me a king—him a king. Then he cut. What d'y' s'pose? An ace? Yes. 'Tommie,' I says to myself, 'but there was a most suspicious twirl to those cards. Tommie,' says I, 'you're up against it—he's doing you, but you can't prove it.' He left me a two to cut and I was broke."

"By the Lord!"

"Yes. So he finding me in the humor and all the time helping the humor along with plenty of cassy—he just wetting his lips and letting me take 'em down to the heel, which I didn't object to, being pretty thirsty—he makes the offer that I come over here to Placentia and pick up herrin' without paying the tonnage tax. 'You get a quartair of the profits,' says he. That meant a thousand dollars to me on a good trip. 'I'll go you,' says I, and we fits out the *Marguerite* and I comes over.

"We were getting along all right until Spriggs gets wind of it and after a lot of hide and seek play in and out behind the rocks and coves he corrals us up at Folly Cove. We'd been ashore to dances three nights running and maybe was a bit sleepy this day. Dancing all night and drivin' your work all day—you can't keep it up, Captain Josh, can you?"

"You cert'nly can't."

"That's what I say—now. Let's have a little touch on that. You do give good moral advice, Captain Josh. Here y'are. Throw it into you and I'll have one myself while I'm standing by. Well, here's a shoot, Skipper. Um-m-m! here's a shoot.

Well all this time I was supposed to be a Frenchman from Saint Peer. I'd a big wig of hair and a big brush of beard and a red shirt and cap to rig up with—all ready handy in case I needed 'em—the red cap with a swell tassel—you oughter've seen it—decorated—gorgeous."

"Any worse than the one you got on now?"

"By the Lord, Captain Josh, I forgot. This is the cap, and the shirt—see here. I've been buttoned up to the chin ever since, so's the Collector wouldn't see—all the way over with Billie Simms."

"H-m—Billie Simms. You and him must've told old Spriggs some fine yarns between you."

"Oh, if you'd only heard! 'By the Lord,' Billie says to the Collector, 'if 'twas anybody else but my old friend Clancy told me I wouldn't believe it. No, Mister Spriggs, I wouldn't.' We was telling the story between us—of the cruise of the *Marguerite*—but here and there where Spriggsy didn't know about I was fillin' in the gaps—and Billie never letting a wink out of him, not a wink. 'By the Lord,' Billie'd say, 'if 'twas anybody else, Collector, but Tommie Clancy was telling it, I wouldn't believe it—no, sir.'

"Well, to go back. When the Collector came aboard the *Marguerite* up in Folly Cove and he begins to talk to me, and me bein' a Frenchman by the way and not able to understand English, has to have a man talk for me—so I sings out for my cordong blur——"

"Your what?"

"My cor-dong blur—my cook. I sings out for the cook to come and interpret—interpret, mind you, Captain Josh. And a proper villain was that same cook, but I fixed him later—Biller's brother, by the way, Cap."

"No? Then I hope you killed him?"

"Not quite. At least there's no report he's dead yet. But that part comes later—about me and the cook. The Collector and myself gets in a knot and finally he winds up by sayin' we was in custody and orderin' us over to Placentia. Just think of ordering a man to take his own vessel over to be soaked! The Lord only knows what we wasn't going to get—to the mines, I cal'late. Well, we starts off with the Collector aboard and his schooner and crew following on behind. When we were clear of the cove, with a promise of breezin' up, and by the way of bein' nice to the Collector, I invites him into the cabin, where I begins to throw cassy into him and to work on his imagination, and I gets very drunk by the way—I'm the French captain all the time, mind. 'Waltzay-voo,' I says—

'Oon—doo—traw—
Balance like mwaw.'

I starts—and him so rattled—oh, Lord! After the waltz I went hunting for an axe to kill him and him, with his hair standing up with horror, spies the lazaretto open, hops in and locks the door. Well, we put in a lot of time dodging into quiet coves and we keeps him in here two days and three nights—all the time working toward Saint Peer—giving him a chance to steal out nights and get grub.

"Now, all the time I was playing the collector, the cook—Biller's brother—was playing me, and it was quite a while before I was sure that something was wrong. But I put this and that together, and I made out that when we got into Saint Peer I was to get the double cross, as they say ashore. The quarter profits Biller promised me—over a thousand dollars it might have been with our load—wasn't comin', d'y' see? And if I made a holler I was to be turned over to the Johnny Darmes and slapped into the lock-up for kidnaping the collector. Well, when I woke up to that I was a proper mad man, but I kept it all to myself till we was almost into Saint Peer Harbor. About two o'clock in the night it was this time—there was one man to the wheel, a watch for'ard and the rest in the fo'c's'le—when I goes to the fo'c's'le companionway and called a couple of 'em up. 'The dories,' says I—'put two over the side and let one of 'em drop astern.' They dropped 'em over. 'Now tell the chef to come up. Tell the quee-see-neer to come up,' I says, and they go below and sends the cook up. 'Chef,' says I, 'you've got a roll of money below and twelve hundred or a thousand of it's comin' to me, and I want to be paid off. Your brother said that just as soon's I brought this vessel in sight of Saint Peer Harbor with a load of herrin' I could draw my quarter profits. Now, I might find an American vessel in the harbor and get a passage, maybe, to Placentia Bay, where my vessel, the *Tubal Cain,* Captain Bradley, is, and I don't want to lose any time, so will you be so good and kind as to let me have the money?' Just like that I said it, as nice and polite as any Frenchman that ever drank Christmas wine in the Caffy Middy itself. It was a kind of a lightsome night, and all the time I was talking I could make out something of the cook's face—'specially his eyes, and they looked wicked, as though he was going to soak me one. They're hell on good manners, some of them Saint Peer Frenchmen, and this one was a killer for politeness—in his way, Captain Josh, but it was a jeesly aggravatin' way.

"The cook smiles. But the smile, Captain Josh, the smile! I ketches that smile, and I says quick, 'Cordong, if I don't get the money now, the *Marguerite* goes up on the rocks. Do I get it?' Well, he dropped his politeness, made a swipe at me and I made one at him. We landed pretty near together, but me a bit first, maybe, and he goes back and down the fo'c's'le ladder. As he goes down, I hollers, 'A bah with you!' 'A bah,' Captain Josh, means 'to hell with you' in French. I got that out just as the for'ard watch, getting onto the game, steps over and swings at me. I sends the watch after the cook, then jumps back aft to the wheel and says to the lad there, 'Get out!—'raus mit sie!—allay!—a bah!'—I wanted to be sure he understood me, and he went for'ard after I helped him along with a few good, swift kicks. The *Marguerite* all this time'd been goin' free, straight for the harbor, but when I got clear of the man at the wheel I hauled her up and, pointing her up plump for the nearest bit of shore, I lets her drive. She didn't have but a cable-length to go, there was plenty of wind and she laid over to it fine. When I made sure she was so close she couldn't go wrong, I put the wheel in the becket and waited for the cook and his gang, who was now hopping out of the fo'c's'le and jumping aft for me. They came piling along by the house. There was two in the wind'ard gangway and another one to looard—all of them close up by the time I let go the wheel and was ready for 'em. I went for the two to wind'ard. With the first one I buried my fist somewhere in his nice fat jowls, and down he goes, blocking up the gangway. The next one comes, and it was the cook, and he had some kind of a rolling-pin in his hand—not a pie-crust rolling-pin, for them Frenchmen, you know, Skipper, don't have pies like us, but he had some kind of a rolling-pin, and he steps up on the chest of the fellow who was down and makes a swipe at me—lunges at me with the rolling-pin and misses—misses, Skipper, and then I had him. Then I had him. Do you mind the time I stayed ashore and went to Carson City to see the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight? Mind how the owners kicked up because it was in Lent, and me fresh-fishin', and the market away up? Well, that fight was all right, and old Fitz he's the real thing. You oughter seen that fight, Captain Josh."

"I wish I had. Excitin', warn't it?"

"Excitin'—a dog of a fight. Well, after they'd been fighting about an hour, old Fitz begins to draw him good and begins to get him where he wants him. I was close down to the ring and could see it all—Fitz winkin' at his wife—she was there—over Corbett's shoulder, and Corbett, because he didn't have the stuff in him, beginning to look blue and frizzled gray, like an old haddock too long out o' water. They came to the last round. Fitz makes a bluff, and Corbett swings and misses—misses, mind, Skipper—just like the cook at me, only Corbett didn't have a rolling-pin. He swings and misses, and his stomach sticks out, and Fitz—old Fitz—lets him have it, a nice, sweet hook—in the stomach you and me'd call it, though 'twas the solar plexus they called it. Well, when Fitz hits him in the solar, Corbett kind of collapses and lets his jaw fall for'ard—for'ard, mind, toward old Fitz, and when it does, Fitz, the hefty lad, jolts him with the other hand and drives it back aft again. Left—right—see, like this—and Mister Corbett he goes down and out. Well, I said to myself when Corbett was lifted out of that, if ever a man comes at me like Corbett did Fitz, that I'd know how to handle him. So when the cook makes a swipe at me this time, the Fitz-Corbett fight pops up in the back of my head, and when he swipes and misses I remembers Carson City. He near lost his balance with his swing, and I lets him have the first one full and fair in the stomach, like Fitz, and then when he kind of collapses, same as Corbett did, and his head comes for'ard to me, I sent my right across—sort of half across—close-hauled you might say—into his jaw—and, Skipper, cordong blur he goes down and out. When I landed him first, he was standing with legs astraddle the other fellow at the after corner of the house. When his head hit the deck, it was at the for'ard corner of the house, and the *Marguerite,* Skipper, has got a pretty fair length of house. A pretty fair jolt I call that, Captain Josh, standing to one side and looking at it now in cold blood. As a connosoor yourself now, Skipper, what do you say?"

"Lord in Israel, yes—and then what, Tommie? What about the fellow to looard?"

"Him to looard? He came at me afore I could turn fair around from the cook and hit me with somethin' side the head—a belayin'-pin, I cal'late. That's where that lump came from. I had to tell some awful good lies to old Spriggs and Harvey to explain that lump and bime-by when you meet them you'll have to sort of return evasive answers—you know, Skipper, not exactly lie, but dodge the truth like—you know. I told 'em I was hit with an axe while tied up in the hold."

"What'd you tell 'em that for?"

"Man, I had to fix up a story for everything on the *Marguerite* and gettin' started on my story kinder hurried like, on the impulse of the moment as you might say, I had to go through with it. You got to be consistent, Skipper, in everything you do if you want to win out. And when once I'd said a thing to Spriggs—I just had to stick to it or they'd have begun to think maybe that I warn't tellin' the truth, and that wouldn't do, you know. Why, if ever they thought that Tommie Clancy and the French captain was one and the same man!—Good Lord! they'd have the whole British North Atlantic squadron up from winter quarters in Bermuda afore they'd let me get away—yes. Just let old Spriggs get to considerin' the outrage to his dignity—him a representative of the Crown, you know—Good Lord, don't you see, Skipper?"

"That's so. But after that fellow hit you on the head with the axe or belayin'-pin or whatever it was, then what?"

"Well, I went down pretty saggy. But I gets up—as soon's I could—shaking in the wind a little bit I was, but I soon begins to find my head again and when I does I starts for him. He makes another swipe, but this time I dodges and as he goes by I ketches him—and let's him have it—oh, Skipper, but I gives him a full. Right under his port ear I took him, Skipper—look, like that, see?—and he lifted from between the wheel and the cabin hatch to over under her lee rail. By the Lord, Skipper, but it was a dream of a punch, every bit as good as the one I handed the cook, and under the lee rail he goes."

"Solomon's wives! Lucky he didn't go overboard, Tommie!"

"That's what he was. But she's got a pretty high rail the *Marguerite* has and he stayed aboard. 'Lay there,' says I, and just then she went up on the rocks. For'ard she heaved two or three times—heaved and pounded, with the planks grinding off her and her booms, fore and main both, thrashing the water to looard, and then she keels over and lays down on her side. At that the other fellows who was coming for me turns and flies for the dory over her side amidships. 'Come back and get your dead ones,' I calls after them. It was lookin' desp'rate for the lad under the lee rail, so I picks him up and drops him for'ard of the house beside the cook to wind'ard. The other lad—the one I hit first—had got up himself, and the cook was beginning to know he was alive again, so a couple of them coming back helped the men I'd punched into the dory. I was thinking o' jumping over the stern into the other dory myself, when I happens to think of old Spriggs below in the lazaretto. So I dives below and makes my way 'round in the water in the cabin. She was filling fast, mind, and I had to drag him out when I did find him. He thought I was the French captain all the time, d'y'see. Up to the very second I showed my head through the lazaretto door after driving my boot through before it, he thought I was the French captain—yes, he did. I grabs him, hauls him out, just barely saving three bottles o' cassy on the way. That was presence of mind, Captain Josh. I saved that cassy in the rush—the last case aboard I minded as it was floating 'round on top of the water in the cabin—the water up to our chests—hauls old Spriggs up the cabin steps, drags him out on deck, heaves him into the dory and jumps in on top of him, near breaking his ribs and nigh bursting the bottles besides, and puts off for the harbor, where we find Billie Simms and get aboard. Billie took us to Good Hope and from there Spriggs took us here. There now, what do you say to that, Captain Josh?"

"Whew-w—" said Captain Joshua.

"Yes, and on the way back here—me rigging up a romance—one with a plot in it—to Collector Spriggs to account for me being aboard the *Marguerite*. And tryin' to keep Billie Simms in order on the way over while I was telling it and then later tryin' to answer questions from the skipper on the *Sleepless*. My soul, Captain Josh, but my head's fair buzzin' with the strain of it all! And I'm dry, Skipper, dry, which is very natural, and maybe even a Bible man like yourself will admit it is very proper, too—under the circumstances—under the circumstances, mind. Won't you now? Of course you will—you'd have to be fair-minded, and there being just enough in this bottle—the bottle I saved from the wreck for you—s'pose we have another little touch? What d'y'say now? A little touch to finish the bottle? Oh, Skipper, hush now. Hush—hush. Here you go now, stow that away with the other good stuff gone before—gone but not forgotten. Ain't that good now, Captain Josh? Ain't it? I'll bet. I knew you'd like it. There's lots of things you'd learn to like, Captain Josh, if only you'd let yourself try them. What you want, Captain Josh, is a little more looseness-like in your soul—take the lock off it. You want to be a little more of what they call in Saint Peer the bong vee-vong. Yes, sir, and an able vee-vong you'd make, too, because you've got it in you. And here's to you, Captain Josh, here's to you. Here's hoping you'll load this brig so deep with herrin' that you'll have to plug her scuppers up—and a good market after you get home—skaal, as the Swedes say—slainte, as Tom O'Donnell used to say—prosit, as Dutch Harry used to say—vive, and in the words of four other languages—Chinese, Chinook, Choctaw, and whatever the other was I had in mind—which I don't remember now—Skipper, here's to your damn good health."

"Drink hearty, Tommie, drink hearty, and by the Lord in Israel, Tommie, you're all right."

"No, Skipper, I ain't all right. But I'd like to be and I'm ready to start in right now. If you had a pledge handy now I'd sign—I would—and keep it—yes, sir, keep it."

"I'm condemned, but I believe you would, Tommie."

"I know I would. But we're getting sentimental. Let's get back to earth. How much herrin' do you callate you got up on the scaffold and on deck, Skipper?"

"Oh, maybe a hundred and fifty or two hundred barrels."

"Well, don't you think we'd better be getting 'em below?"

"I dunno. I was cal'lating to let 'em stay a while longer. What do you think?"

"Let 'em stay? Good Lord, no. Get 'em below and make way for others. This bay's full of herrin' right now and I know where they are. I'll tend to them herrin', Skipper, and you turn in and have a kink for yourself. I know you've been sitting up nights on account of me, but you just forget all that now. I'll have the gang making the tackles sing in ten minutes and don't you worry. Just wait now till I get into my oilskins and watch them herrin' disappear like ice in the Gulf Stream—yes, sir. Let me see now—where's my oilskins? Oh, yes, here. So long, Skipper. Turn in now and have a kink for yourself, while I go on deck and take charge."

Up the companionway went Clancy and soon the creaking and pounding and general hullabaloo from above told the skipper's experienced ear that that able seaman was keeping all hands on the jump.

"And if he does get drunk now and then"—Captain Josh was preparing to turn in for the sleep that Clancy had so soothingly advised him to take—"even if he does, the Lord knows he don't mean no harm by it. And when he does get to work he's good as three. He cert'nly knows his business. Listen to him now."

From the deck came floating down:

"Jer swee le capitaine de la Marguerite,
De la Marguerite, de la Marguerite—
Jer swee le capitaine de la Marguerite,
My Marguerite so belle.
My Marguerite, my Marguerite,
With the face so sweet and waist so neat,
And eyes! Mong doo—her eyes!
Oh, eyes like stars in a well."

"Listen to him now." Captain Joshua kicked off his boots. "Marguerite, I s'pose, is the last girl he made love to. There he goes again."

The somewhat husky but ever tuneful baritone went on:

"Last time I saw my Marguerite—
My Marguerite, my Marguerite—
I said to her, 'Cher Marguerite,
You certainly are belle.'
She kisses me, I kisses her,
She coos to me, 'Oh, oh, mong coor!'
I holds her tight, says I, 'My gem,'
Says she, 'Je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime!'"

"What in the name o' Tophet that 'Je tem, je tem, je tem,' is, I don't know. But, O Lord, what's the use of trying to keep track of what's in Tommie's brain." From force of habit Captain Joshua took a look at the barometer on the wall. "Twenty-nine six. There'll be a breeze soon. But Tommie'll have everything snug before that comes. Coat o' Joseph, but he's off again."

"And face!—and feet!—
Mong doo!—her feet!
And eyes like stars in a well,
And eyes like stars in a well."

"Them eyes must've been wonders," murmured the skipper of the *Tubal Cain*. He rolled yet farther into his bunk, turned his face to the side of the vessel, pulled the blanket over his head and decided to forget Clancy and go to sleep; but the last thing he heard before he did finally get to sleep was an even more beatific reference to the wonderful eyes,

> "And eyes like stars in a well—oh, hell—
> And– eyes– like– stars– in– a– w–e–l–l–l."

And by that, even though he did not long remain awake to think it out, the master of the *Tubal Cain* knew that Clancy was himself again.

# XXII

## THE BLASPHEMER

THEY were fitting out the *Julia Haskins* for a salt-fishing trip, and a cask of beef was about to be hoisted aboard. An easy package it should have been for the three lumpers to handle, two on the dock to hoist and one to guide and receive it on the vessel's deck below; but these were careless—one paused midway to look at an incoming Italian bark. "They say she's got twenty thousand tubs of salt in her hold," he observed. "No!" exclaimed his mate, and also turned his head. Down between dock and vessel plopped the cask.

The lumpers, leaning over string-piece and rail, gazed down at where it had disappeared in the muddy water, then stood up and eased their souls with three separate strings of oaths; particularly he who was most to blame, whose eyes had been first diverted by the green-painted bark.

The man who should have been most concerned, master and owner of the vessel, he who would have to pay the bill, did not step a foot nearer the scene of the catastrophe; merely looked toward the men at fault and said: "I cal'late that's gone. You might've been more careful, Charley, but get a move on and go ahead with the rest of the stores. And one of you go up to the office and tell 'em to send down another cask of beef."

Old Peter and the usual staff of assistants up in Crow's Nest had observed the incident of the cask. They all drew long breaths and began to talk at once. "Did you see that, Peter? And he never let a yip out of him. Why there's some skippers would have skinned those lumpers alive! And swear? Why, just imagine what"—and named, one after the other, a dozen well-known masters of vessels. "Why, they'd been a smell of hot copper blowing up here long afore this. Why is that, Peter, d'y' s'pose?"

Peter turned to them. "Why d'y' s'pose? It's before any of you were old enough to be allowed to loaf around here; but if you won't let that fire die down, I'll tell it. Pity among seven of you you can't put one piece of wood in the fire." He had to stop then to put the glasses on a sail that was lifting above the horizon at Eastern Point. His face had taken on a sudden animation. "It's queer, now, if it should be *her*—but time enough," and carefully laid down the glasses.

"This man below, Jed Stevens, that never opened his mouth a while ago, where many another man might've considered he had justification, came of a family of swearers. He had an older brother, Lewis, was the awful man at it. I mind there was a partic'lar main boom that the owners ordered for his new vessel one time and Lewis didn't like the looks of it, and swore so hard over it—four lines of rhyme he made of it—that he went home and died. Busted a blood-vessel or something. Well, when Lewis died everybody said that Jed would keep up the reputation of the family as he'd grow older. And he did. Only he couldn't make poetry of it like his older brother. However, he was the awful man with the language, and for that reason alone hard to get along with. Good men don't care to have a skipper swearing at 'em day and night. Men used to come and go with him so fast that he rarely carried the same crew two trips in succession. His own brother Mark—the youngest of the three brothers, a fine young fellow, and who didn't have the gift of swearin'—left him that way. And that worried Jed, who thought a lot of Mark—a lot more than ever he let on. He went out of his way to get him to come back, but Mark said: 'When you learn to control your tongue, I'll ship with you—not till then.'

"In those times Jed used also to get pretty drunk now and then. One trip he started out that way—kept the jug between his knees all the way to the grounds, and never moved to his meals, just sat there and drank—straight from the jug, bothering with no mug or glass on the way. The second night out it came on to blow pretty hard, and the vessel began to groan under it. But luckily not much sea in the beginnin', and also lucky, it bein' winter, that she warn't carryin' her topm'sts; but even with her four lowers it was gettin' too much for her. She was rolling down outrageously, but nobody dared to take any sail off her without the skipper's orders, and he was drunk in his bunk, half comin' to himself, and getting up for another drink every few hours, swearing while he was drinkin', and then rollin' back again.

"Well, the old *Jonathan Edwards* dived along, taking most of it aboard. We could do nothing but batten down everything and let her go, hopin' the skipper would come to himself before 'twas too late. He did come to after a while—sixteen hours on end he'd slept—and rolled out of his bunk and began to notice things. First, he noticed that the companionway was closed tight. 'Open up them hatches and give us some air,' he snarled, and a string of blue oaths with it.

"The boards was no more than slid out of the way when a sea came pouring into the cabin and set everything that was loose adrift. The sight of the water didn't soften his temper any. He swashed around in it in his stockin' feet and swore harder than ever. 'That's what I like to see," he says—'the old girl givin' herself a bath,' and another sea come aboard and below and piled up over the lockers and into the lee bunks.

"He thought he'd take a look outside then, but hadn't got his head out the companionway when down upon him tumbled a little mountain of water that floated him down the cabin steps. Well, he swore and blasphemed worse than ever at that. He'd go on deck, he would, if the entire blasted ocean was to roll over him. And he did, not yet altogether sober, and climbs out on deck and holds on by the wind'ard corner of the house.

"'You blasted, blear-eyed dogfish, how's she behavin'?' he roars to Ben Garland, who had the wheel.

"'She's not behavin',' Ben fires back at him. 'She's got more sail on than any mortal vessel should.'

"'But this is no mortal vessel—she's the devil's own, and I'm the devil's own boy. Did you know that, Bennie? No? Well, that's what—I'm the devil's own boy, and you're one of my crew. And the Old Boy'll stand by his own, never you worry,' and more of that kind of talk, and then, crawling over to the main riggin', and happening to look to wind'ard, he spies for the first time the *Grenada,* a fine vessel which had come upon us during the afternoon.

"He begins to swear at her and at her skipper. 'There he is, Bob Miller, the dog's whelp, who took my brother away from me,' and then from cursin' Miller, began cursin' the sea, and back again to the *Grenada* and Bob. 'But I'll head him off—I'll head him off. I know the little spot he's beating up for, and I'll be there and have a dory over afore him.'

"And the wind kept comin' harder, and everything aboard her under an awful strain. There were queer lights on the water and her sheets were like iron bars. 'Skipper,' calls whoever it was to the wheel, 'if you don't take something off her soon, I'll cut.'

"'You cut and I'll cut you—cut your blasted head off.' But 'twarn't blasted nor no such mild word *he* used, but a word to make a man's blood run cold. 'Go for'ard, you milk-and-water son of a she-wolf, and let a man take the wheel. Cut, will you? Cut? Not if her trucks was rolling under. Go for'ard.'

"With him in that state of mind we ran onto the grounds and alongside the *Grenada,* which being a big sailer, a lot faster than the *Jonathan,* was there hours before us. It was a wicked morning. The *Grenada* was hove-to, waiting for it to moderate before they'd put a dory over. Jed Stevens ran the *Jonathan* up under the *Grenada's* quarter and hailed. Everybody came on deck at his voice. Jed's young brother, Mark, I mind, was there.

"Mark called out, 'Hello, Jed!' for with all his brother's backslidings he couldn't help having some affection for him. But Jed didn't notice him, only began to swear and blaspheme at Miller.

"'And so you're afraid to put a dory over? And there's owners that give your kind a vessel, Bob Miller? Well, I'll show you up—and right now.' And, 'Wind'ard dory to the rail!' he orders.

"Over on the *Grenada,* as we could see, Miller could hardly believe it; but seein' our dory to the rail, he began to get nervous, for, you see, the partic'lar spot—the Gully 'twas called, new discovered then—was full of halibut, and whatever skipper got their trawls out first would get the fish in the first of their hunger. There was the good fishin', and besides that no crew of men goin' fishin' likes to stand by and let another crew shame 'em. And no skipper is goin' to stand by after bein' dared as Bob Miller was by Jed Stevens. No, sir, he warn't goin' back to Gloucester and have that said about him. So Bob orders a dory to the rail, too. Through the mist we could barely see him, we havin' drifted away some by then, but bein' to looard we could hear his voice.

"We hoisted a dory to the rail and Ben Garland threw in two skates of trawls. Ben's and my dory it was. Over went the dory and with it Ben and myself to the rail, him to the stern and me to the bow falls, waitin' for a chance to leap into it. Ben leaped and I leaped. And then came a roar, and over us like a tidal wave tumbled what I thought was the whole blessed ocean. Up against the side of the vessel went the dory, smash! Across the rail of the vessel the sea hove me—close by the main riggin', which I grabbed and hung onto till the crew helped me aboard. I was the lucky man. Two of my ribs stove in, but I didn't know that till later. But not so Ben. 'Peter's all right, but Ben's gone!' I heard somebody call out. The next thing I heard the skipper yellin': 'No, he ain't—I got him!' And, sure enough, he had gaffed in Ben as he was goin' by the quarter. Even as we looked, Ben, with the skipper's help, was climbing over the rail. 'Didn't I tell you the devil takes care of his own, Bennie?' the skipper was sayin', and began a new blasphemin' to make your blood curdle.

"Suddenly somebody yells, 'Let the main sheet run!' I looked and saw the squall, and, knowin' what was meant—that she'd never stand with the mains'l taking it full, that she'd capsize or else take the spars out of her—with a couple of others I jumped aft, all of us roarin', 'Your main sheet, Skipper!'

"The skipper, still blaspheming, didn't make out what we were so excited about, and when I rushed for the sheet, and he saw what I would be at, he grabbed me. And then we had it, the pair of us wrestlin' for the sheet. His hand was to my throat and my fingers to his windpipe. I mastered him and was about to cast off the end of the sheet when it came—a blast of wind and the followin' sea, and over she went on her beam ends.

"We considered ourselves gone then and rushed up to the wind'ard side of her to hang on to what we could and for as long as we could before she went down. And while we were clingin' there, some in the fore and some in the main rigging, Ben and myself on what part of the wind'ard quarter was out of water, the skipper all at once gripped my arm. I c'n feel the grip to this day. 'Peter, Peter, look there and tell me d'you see it, too! Maybe it isn't so, Peter.' He was crouched over the rail, his body shrinkin', and one hand up to his head as if he was afraid something was going to strike him, and what I could see of his face was the color of one of the gray seas that was hissing around us in the queer light of that wicked morning. And he took his hand down and looked again from the vessel, searching the crests of the nearest seas to wind'ard, and we looked where he was lookin', and there was nothing. And we said, 'Where, Skipper, where?' and looked again, and that time we saw what it was—close by the vessel's side now. Driftin' by under her counter, under our feet almost, it was—the dead body of Mark Stevens, the eyes from out of the dead face staring up—God, yes—at his brother, as if reproaching him. 'My judgment!' says Jed, that time not even raising his voice. Man, 'twas awful, and as we looked it drifted off astern of the vessel and sank slowly—slowly—from out of sight—if you can imagine a body sinkin' that way and at the same time bein' buffeted about in the sea. Lookin' farther, we saw what was left of a stove-in dory atop of another curvin' sea, and we knew what had happened. They had tried to launch a dory same as we did. And what had nigh happened to Ben, my dory-mate, was what did happen to Mark Stevens, and our vessel bein' close by and to looard of them, his body had been tossed down to us."

The Italian bark had come to anchor, and Peter had to stop to admire her. "A handsome craft that—aye, a noble vessel. Why don't we have fleets of those under our flag? And twenty thousand tubs of salt I hear she has in her. And there!—Jed Stevens'll probably take his salt from her—four hundred tubs he gen'rally takes. And when he's wet four hundred tubs he'll sure have some fish in her hold." Peter paused while he glanced down to the *Julia Haskins,* in whose stern was now her skipper, standing with hat off, gazing seaward.

Peter's eyes shone with pity. "Ive seen him stand there and look out like that a hundred times. And always quiet, just like you see him now, and as if wonderin' at something or other, or fearful of something or other. Maybe you noticed a while ago that he never looked over the side of the vessel after that cask of beef sank almost under his feet? That's because it went down under her port quarter. At sea he won't even heave the lead from her port quarter—he'll bring her to on the other tack before he'll do that. It was under her port quarter he saw his brother's body drifting. He'll look far away and off from that quarter, but never down and under her counter."

"And he don't blaspheme any more, Peter?"

"Blaspheme! I don't believe he ever even *thinks* of blasphemin' now. No milder-mannered, nor more temperate man sails out of Gloucester to-day. Queer how human nature works, isn't it? I used to think that long before this he'd be back to his old ways, but he never has. But let me see." Peter directed his glasses toward the horizon. "That one standing in—it *is* the old *Grenada*—the sight of her on the horizon brought it all back to me. A dog in her day, the *Grenada.* She sailed five mile to the *Jonathan's* four that passage out, spite of the sail we tried to carry. And took us off—lassoed us off the deck of her afore the *Jonathan* sank that morning. Let me see—seven weeks on a halibut trip—*'bout* time she showed up. No, Jed don't even swear any more. But, man, man, what a tough lesson he took afore he came to it!"

# XXIII

## AMERICANIZATION OF ROLL-DOWN JOE

THE latest development of the American fishing schooner came smartly to anchor in mid-stream.

From his perch in Crow's Nest, a cable-length abeam of the vessel, but mast-head high in the air, old Peter looked down on her with wonder and respect commingled. "No bigger a mains'l ever swept past the Point! Look at the spread of it! Isn't that an ungodly armful to have to gather up on a jumping deck in a gale o' wind? Eighty-four-foot boom and fifty-two-foot gaff! You could sweep all the waters of the earth with all the search-lights of Heaven and never a schooner of her tonnage would you find swingin' such a sail. And if you could find one, where but among American fishermen would you find a man would go outside a harbor in so much as a summer gale with that boom and that sail above it to be layin' out to looard of their rail?"

"But this man, Peter—he'll carry it?"

"Till all's blue. Eighty-four-foot boom! And I mind when they used to boast of their sixty-foot booms, and now the storm trys'ls of this one I expect'll lace to most that len'th."

"Portugee, ain't he, Peter?"

"Portugee-born," amended Peter, "but a good American citizen now."

"But isn't that surprising, Peter, his having the best out?"

"Surprisin'!" retorted Peter. "Meanin' because he's Portugee? H-m-m. A sensible remark, that, when so far's any of us can learn this man's ancestors were sailormen—navigators and world-explorers—when your forefathers, or mine, maybe, were tryin' to get up courage to visit the neighborin' mainland."

"But people new to this country."

"New people!" snorted Peter. "Man alive, where'd we be but for the new people? It's they puts the life into us. While the descendants of the old settlers are leanin' back in easy-chairs, brains and bodies all used up, not an original notion left in 'em—from overwork, or overworry, or too much fat livin', or whatever 'tis that's ailin' them—it's the new people are coming along and gettin' things goin' again. Look right here in

Gloucester now—is it the new blood, or the old, that's mannin' the fleet? And this same Roll-Down Joe—this Portugee immigrant, as they call him—industrious, upright, sober, intelligent—as are all but damn few of his kind that ever I see—he's standin' simply for one of the dozen big nations that's made us what we are or will make us what we're to be."

"But how'd he get the name, Peter? Must be some story back of a name like that."

It was while Joe was still but little known in Gloucester (began Peter) but not so green that he hadn't managed to absorb a good many of the leadin' principles of the fishin' fleet, that him and Wesley Marrs were racin' home from the Western Banks one time, and after sixty hours of it Joe thought he needed a kink of sleep. So he started to go below, when the man to the wheel stopped him. It was blowin' hard then, the *Isabella* rollin' down pretty well under it. "S'pose it gets worse while you're below, Skipper, what'll I do?" asks the man to the wheel.

"What you do? Why, keep her goin'," says Joe. "Keep da *Isabell* goin', sure."

"But how long, Skipper? There's a limit to everything—how long?"

Joe studied a minute, then made a chalk line on the deck well up to wind'ard of the wheel-box. "When she roll down to there, call me," says Joe, and went below.

"Cripes!" says the man to the wheel; "when she rolls down to there, do you think there'll be anybody left on deck to call you?"

Well, I was the man to the wheel that time, and when I got to Gloucester I told the story, and ever since then they've called him Roll-Down Joe. He cert'nly promised even then to carry sail with the best of them. And he'd been in the country such a short time then that the master's papers had to be taken out in the name of one of his crew—who again happened to be me.

It 'twarn't long before everybody began to take notice of Joe. Or most everybody, rather, because there's always those who can never be brought to like those whose ways are different from their own. But the best people liked him. And you couldn't help it—he was so eager to win your good-will and he set such store by what you said, you couldn't help but like him. The people of the South seem to be like that, don't they?—want you to like 'em whatever else you do. There was nothing this man wouldn't do to please you. Nat'rally the killers began to take to him, and nat'rally, too, what they said was law to Joe. That was about the time when nothing 'd do the killers but Oregon pine spars. Joe's were Georgia pine. What you want, Joe, is Oregon pine sticks," says Wesley Marrs to him one day, and went on to explain what beautiful specimens his own were.

Joe grew excited. "I get dem," he says. "How mooch they costa—what? Fi' hundred dollar? No matt', I get dem," says Joe. "Fi' hundred, one t'ousand—no matt', I get dem. I wanta da ver' best."

"That's right, Joe—the best is none too good for you and me," says Wesley; "but don't go throwing away any five hundred dollars foolish. Wait some day till you're out to sea and consult your almanac, Joe, and when them zodiac signs indicate a good breeze o' wind and a handy harbor in conjunction, then do you slap everything you got to her, and—who knows?—it may be your lucky day, and maybe them spars'll just nach'ally sag over the side o' themselves," advises Wesley.

Joe looked puzzled.

"The insurance company'll have to pay for 'em then," explains Wesley.

"Ah-h! Ver' good, ver' good," shouted Joe, and a week later, in a howlin' gale of wind, he sailed the *Isabella* back and forth off Halifax tryin' to lift the masts out of her. But they were fine stout sticks and though they buckled like umbrella ribs they just wouldn't come out, so Joe went on to east'ard with the old sticks. But when next he met Wesley he apologized for not doing better. "May-bee ten ton more bal-last and a leet' more win' next time an' I do eet," he said to Wesley.

Well, Joe, bringin' home the fish reg'larly as he did, was makin' a name for himself among the fishermen. And doin' his best to live up to it, too. 'Twarn't long before he got to where he shifted his drink from port wine to whiskey, and could smoke fifteen-cent cigars on the curb-stone like any American-born. Along about there he came to me one day and said, "Peter, I moost be one ceet-zen, one American ceet-zen." So I steered him up to City Hall, up to the proper grating in the proper room where was a clerk, who, after he'd finished puttin' just the exact point on his pencil and had manicured his nails once or twice again—and it didn't take him any longer to do it than it would take an average trawler to bait a six-line string of gear—he has time for us. I explained what Joe was after and Joe told his name, a good old Portuguese name, too; but it didn't seem to hit the fancy of this lad in the cage.

"Do you expect me to spell or pronounce a name like that? Wonder you wouldn't take some good local name."

Joe was a bit cast down—he had a bit of sentiment about his name. But he was bound to be an American citizen, and thought if change of name was part of it, why he'd change his name. So he tried to think of a good American name and, recollectin' some of his skipper friends, "Ah-h, yess, yess—O'Don-nell, Tom O'Don-nell," he says.

"W-r-r-h," says the clerk. "Look out the window at those signs across the street."

Joe looked, with an eye all the time for the fine big letters, and picked out the biggest sign in sight. It read:

BURNHAM
COAL AND WOOD

The Burnham part of it was only of moderate size, while the "Coal and Wood" was in six-foot letters up and down so you couldn't go astray. The coal part, happenin' to be to wind'ard, Joe picked that out for his, and, after carefully copyin' it onto a piece of paper like a sign-painter, brought it to the clerk. "One good American name, hah?" he says.

"That's better," says the clerk. "But a wonder you wouldn't spell it right. C-o-l-e it should be," and made out a paper for Joseph Cole, native of St. Michaels, Azores Islands, Portugal, and——

Peter, happening to glance out to where the talkative, gesticulating, but active and efficient dark-bearded men were putting the great mainsail in stops, came to a pause. Presently, his eyes twinkling, he resumed:

And I s'pose that a couple of hundred years from now the genealogy sharks will be diggin' up a fine Anglo-Saxon pedigree of Joe's descendants, if it happens they want to get into one of those Who's Who societies we read about in the papers, as all the time guaranteein' which is the sure-enough thing. Joe's descendants—and they'll probably be numerous, for he's got seven children of his own already—they'll probably discover some day that they're descended from some fine old Northumberland family, so named because of the coal-mining properties they owned, or maybe the pedigree experts will tell them they were so named because of their dark complexions.

Well, Joe kept comin'. I saw him one night playin' duplicate whist in the Master Mariners' rooms, and he most burstin' with the things he wanted to say but couldn't, because some good friends told him 'twas against the rules to talk while you were playing whist, though everybody was talkin' around him. Says I, that's sure the finishin' touch. But it warn't. He didn't put on the last little rag polish to his Americanization till about the time he was expectin' his final naturalization papers, the papers that'd give him the right to vote. He was haddockin' in South Channel then, market-fishin' into Boston. And that's the devil's own fishin', let me tell you—night and day, rain or shine, till you fill her up—with those old-country Irishmen, Dungarven, Claddagh and Kincaid men to set the pace. You need to be an iron man to stand it. And their everlastin' racin' to market! For whoever hits the Boston market right in haddockin' he's sure the boy that shares big, and blessed little if you don't hit it right, for those Boston dealers they cert'nly want it all.

So the competition there is pretty keen, as you know, and nobody was any keener than Joe Cole to hold his own. We'd been hove-to under our fores'l for eight days waitin' for it to moderate so's we could get a chance to fish. A Tuesday morning that was, and not a vessel in the fleet, we felt sure, had a pound of fish in her hold. But such fishin' when he did shove the dories over! They must have been fair starved out down below, waitin' with their mouths open, and just over the right spot we must have been, for it was a fish to every hook. Next morning at five o'clock there was sixty thousand of fish iced below or ready to dress on deck. "Sweeng her off," says Joe, "an' we mak' da market dees aft'noon." It was in Lent, and Joe could hardly hold himself when he thought of it. "We ketcha da market dry," says Joe, "mak' plenta mon-ee dees trip, you see."

And it did look good for us. It didn't seem possible that any vessel could have loaded up as fast as we did, and if we could get home that day, which seemed likely—a great sailin' breeze, with no more than a hundred and twenty miles to the dock and twelve hours and a fresh, fair wind to do it in—it looked good. And of course if it *was* a fish famine after that long spell of bad weather, we cert'nly were in for a big share.

So off we went, across the channel and up by Cape Cod in good shape. And with the wind making all the time, we straightened out for a run across the bay in fine spirits. Nothing, we thought then, could stop her from gettin' to T wharf, with time to spare, nothing short of dismastin', and they bein' those same good old Georgia pine sticks that Joe had tried so hard to carry away off Halifax, we had no fear of that.

We were belting along then, not ten miles from the lightship, the vessel hikin' everlastin'ly and the gang already spendin' their money—a couple up to the Boston Theater; another looking over the bank-book with his wife—who'd just come back from depositin' forty dollars in the savings-bank, and that made three hundred and twenty-nine dollars and fourteen cents, not countin' interest due but not yet entered; another chap was being measured for a nine-dollar pair o' pants, the only thing worryin' him was would he have a blue seam—when came a squall that struck us fair. Over she went, with most of her deck under water. And stayed there for a while. But she was all right, she didn't quite capsize; only when she did come up we had to break out her topside plankin' with hand-spikes, so's the water could run off her deck before we could get her goin' again.

And that would've been all right, only away up to wind'ard ten miles or more—we could just make her out—was a three-masted schooner hove-down. Only, different from us, she showed no signs of coming up. Well, there was nothing to it but go up to her. And maybe Joe didn't look back longin'ly at the lightship when we wore 'round.

It must have taken us two hours to beat up—not much sea, but wind somethin' desp'rate—and when we got alongside we had to be everlastin'ly careful in takin' them off, and particularly careful with one gent, a passenger, who turned out to be her owner. He'd been takin' a cruise along the coast in this vessel of his. A big, fine-lookin' chap, and a pretty decent kind, except that when he got his courage back he developed into one of those kind that look you over and think because you hustle for a livin' you must have lost any nat'ral intelligence you ever had, if ever you had any—one of those "my good man" kind of chaps.

"I'll do something handsome for you, you'll see," he says to

Joe. This was after we'd got him dried out and the rosy color came into his face again. And he pats Joe on the back, which Joe didn't quite like, comin' from a stranger; but you have to make allowances for a man whose life you've just saved, though just then Joe warn't payin' too much attention to this lad's speeches. Joe was mostly worryin' would he get to T wharf before five o'clock that afternoon or not.

We didn't make the market—not that day. The market had been closed ten minutes when we dove into the slip. And you would 'a' had to sympathize with the skipper if you'd seen him sittin' on the cap-log fannin' himself with his sou'wester. He was downcast sure enough. "Haddock seex centa an' da cod eight centa da poun'. Dees trip good for four t'ousan' dollar if we been in one leet' half hour ago."

Knowin' just how he felt, I tried hard to cheer him up. "It may be even higher in the morning, Skipper," I said. "If no other vessel comes in it's sure to," I goes on, "for with a Friday in Lent ahead of them they got to have the fish to fill the orders. And if it is, Skipper, you'll have a market trip stock that'll go down to posterity."

Just to think of it made him smile—if nobody came in during the night!

Peter stopped short and began to laugh softly.

"What was it, Peter—nobody in?"

Peter roared: Nobody in! Next mornin' there were thirty-five haddockers into the dock. You couldn't see the harbor for masts, and trys'ls hung up to dry. And fish! 1,364,589 pounds of fish to the dock that day. I remember the figures well, the record day of that year, and from eight and six cents a pound cod dropped to two and a quarter and haddock to a dollar and a quarter a hundred. Instead of stockin' four thousand we stocked less than nine hundred dollars. Instead of the crew sharing a hundred and fifty or sixty dollars apiece, we shared twenty-six dollars and twenty-three cents apiece for our two weeks of a winter trip.

You oughter seen Joe. "Dam!" says he. "Dam again all men that can-not han-del a ves-sel! Dam! T'ree t'ousan' dollar lost for one leet' squall! Dam! dam! dam!" in little explosions like a gasoline engine around deck.

That same afternoon Joe's final papers came to him, and he went up to an Atlantic Avenue hotel with Wesley Marrs and Tom O'Donnell, his two great models, to look them over. They'd hardly gone when the owner he'd rescued from the three-master came down the dock lookin' for the skipper.

He was rosy as any apple with good humor and impatience, so I brought him up to the hotel. He pounced on Joe. "Ha, I've found you! I've been up and down the dock looking for you, as this man"—meanin' me—"will tell you. You did me a good turn yesterday—good seamanship and a good spirit displayed. And I know that you must have lost some time in doing it. Now, now. I kept track—three hours or more it must have been, and you shall be reimbursed—paid—and paid well for it."

Joe raised his hand, palm out, protestin'. "No, no. For sav-ving life we can tak' no mon-ee."

"Now, now. I did not say this was for saving life." And the smile of him! You'd think Joe was some three-year old child he was talkin' to. "No, not for saving life—allow me"—he goes on—"but for the time lost in saving life—for the time lost."

"For da time lost in sav-ving life I tak' no mon-ee," repeats Joe.

"But you must, Captain. You really must let me have my way. And I will split no hairs over it. You and your men work hard, and your rewards, I know, are not great. Three hours for twenty-four men—how will that do?" and he held out some bank notes.

"What ees it?" said Joe.

"Why," said the rescued chap, "American money—a hundred dollars. See?—five twenties. A hundred dollars. Now in the country where you come from——"

"Yess," interrupted Joe, "in da countree where I come from a hund'ed dollar is mooch mon-ee, ver' mooch. But dere also we tak' no mon-ee—not for sav-ving life."

"But you must," said this chap, and forced the bill into Joe's hands.

Joe looked at the bills. "My, such a heap!" he says after a little study, and held them up for Marrs and O'Donnell to look at, and after they'd had a look he crumpled them up in his fist, and then, with a little sly smile at the man, he smoothed one out and in the most absent-minded way in the world he reached over to the little alcohol lamp at the end of the bar, stuck the bill into the flame, and with it lit his cigar.

The passenger jumped a yard into the air. "My God!" he shrieked, "what are you doing?"

"What ees?" says Joe, surprised-like, at the same time stampin' what was left of the bill to ashes under his toe, and only then seemin' to take notice of what he had done. "Ah, ah. I burn da mon-ee? What a mistak', sooch a mistak', ver' foolish. My brain it ees, what you say? bis-ee. But I will mak' a' right," and diggin' into his pants pocket he pulled out a great wad of bills, from which he took a twenty and handed it with the other four bills to the passenger. The passenger drew back.

"You do not weesh to tak'?" says Joe.

"It is for you, Captain, and then the men, your crew——"

"Ah-h, for da crew?" and turned to where I was standing. "Here, Peter, tak' dis mon-ee, dees fine gentla-man geev, an' buy see-gar, good see-gar, min' you. See-gar—er, no, see-gar-ette for da gang," and tossed the hundred dollars over to me.

By this time the passenger was making all kinds of queer faces. "Have some drink?" asked Joe politely. And the man, kind of dazed still, said he guessed he'd take a little whiskey and soda.

"P-s-s-t!" said Joe. His mustache curled and his earrings almost tinkled. "Whis-key an' so-da! Dees no gang cheapa sport. Dees here Capta' Tom O'Don-nell, dees Capta' Wesley Marrs." Then, rapping on the bar, Joe ordered the bartender to bring on a quart of the fizzy stuff, and after that another quart, and on top of that another, and was ordering another—all in a rush—and had spread out on the bar the papers that made him an American citizen, to call the man's attention to them, when he flew out the door. "Ah-h," said Joe sadly, "an' I wanta heem to see dese—what you call heem, dat long word, Tom?"

"Naturali-zation papers, naturali-zation, and say it slow, Joe."

"Ah-h, yess—what eet ees you say, Tom, what geev me vote—dat right?"

"That's right, Joe, and 'twas treason to keep you waitin'. You ought to been votin' the day you hit the country, Joe."

Joe smiled. "Anny-way, a good ceet-zen now, hah, Tom—a good American ceet-zen Joe Cole now, hah, Wes-ley?"

"That's what," says Wesley. "And the way you tossed that hundred to Peter Joe, it was nothing less than—how is it they say it in the theater, Tom?"

"Soo-per-r-b is the word, Wesley. With a gesture of sooperb contimpt, is the words they use."

"Ah-h," said Joe, and signed for another quart. "We dreenk to one new American ceet-zen, Joe Cole! M-m—" he drew in a great breath. "And ah-h, it tak' us to show dem da true American way. Hah, Tom? Hah, Wesley?"

Peter had risen to mark on the blackboard the names of vessel and master, but, with chalk in air, he paused. "And I say with O'Donnell and Wesley, 'tisn't the len'th of time a man's been in the country that makes a citizen of him. Joe was of more use to the country the first day he set foot on an American dock, of more use than many who'd vote to keep him out, of more use than many that's got ancestral halls and don't see anything right in the country nowadays, but who wouldn't themselves lose a night's sleep or the nail off a finger to make it right. Those others talk; but Joe's kind is the kind that's always been throwin' a halo round the people and the institutions of the country he adopts. Joe's kind, that don't half the time know whether his country is right or wrong, and don't half the time care, is the kind that since nations were nations has gone out and died for the flag that's over them. And made but little fuss about it. And the horizon, you'll take notice, is blotted out with but few monuments to the memory of that kind."

Carefully Peter was writing it down—"Schooner *Bonita,* master Joseph Cole," when—"But, Peter, did you really buy cigars for the money?"

The wrinkles spread from the corner of Peter's mouth till they reached to under his ears. "H-m—well, not for the whole hundred. But let me tell you, boy, what cigars we did smoke that day—they were cert'nly a damn swell brand."

# XXIV

## THE ICE-DOGS

In the brackish waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to which the entire west coast of Newfoundland is exposed, the winter ice forms early and stays late. By the end of December the ice-fields, which are even then beginning to lock in the westerly coast of Labrador, need only a hard frost to become welded into solid floes; and these floes but a northerly or westerly gale to start on their way; and once on the way there is no halt until the entire west coast of Newfoundland has been shut in.

Whatever vessel is fairly caught in the gulf by that moving mass is there to stay, crushed generally like a toy-store boat, until the warmer breezes of late spring cast the crumpled planking free. Once in a great while a craft so caught drifts about in the ice, and, escaping uncrushed, is picked up, a floating derelict, in the warmer weather, but never in such are any live men found.

Familiar with all the traditions of the dreadful gulf ice, knowing well the danger that lay before them, the master of the *Arbiter* very well knew what the trader Lackford had in mind when he hailed after his departing vessel: "Well, you've got your load, but you'll never get to the States with it. You'll do well if you don't leave her out in the gulf—and you and your crew's bones in her. She'll make a fine hard-pine coffin for you all!"

"Hard pine and oak," the master amended, grimly—"good three-inch oak to her topsides," and lightly swung his little schooner out of the north arm of the Bay of Islands. He had loaded her in the teeth of opposition, and what Lackford and his associates thought mattered little now.

In the restricted waters of North Arm the gale, coming in puffs only, had allowed intervals of rest; but in the more open reaches of the bay there was no easement from the force and bite of it. Down it came from off the headlands in shooting, whistling squalls that, inshore, cut the crests off the ambitious little seas as if edged with steel, and offshore threatened to snatch the canvas from the vessel; and, still rushing onward, did whip the width and breadth of the surface of the bay till all alee was a turmoil of white spume; and so cold was it that the men were forced to duck their heads sideways to the wind and spray.

And yet in it was a beauty to inspire, as the crew, intent on their work, could not but notice. There was the vessel tearing through a rolling level of feather-white; there were the heavens unflecked, and of a blue so pale as to have a touch of green in it; and only that tint of greenish-blue in all that frosty sky, except for one long streak of vivid crimson edging the crests of the high hills now coming abeam; and the hollows of those same hills, ordinarily so gray and forbidding, were now invested with those purplish shadows which, the natives say, never cling just so except before the twilight of a clear, freezing winter's day.

"'God in Heaven, but 'tis grand!" murmured the master; breathed it like a prayer, but might not look his fill because of the danger ahead, where from the mists loomed steep-sided heights, which would need to be weathered ere they were free of the Bay of Islands.

From the hard-featured old bluff called Blow-me-down came the gale in renewed gusts, before which the *Arbiter* again and again careened so dangerously that even this habituated crew gazed thoughtfully down the icy slope of her deck. But always the master watched, and, eye and judgment never failing, she was luffed, and luffed again, never too soon to lose distance, never too late for salvation.

The crew, standing by the sheets, blew on their fingers and threshed benumbed hands across their muffled-up breasts. "Wow! but somebody's ketchin' it somewhere to-night!"

"Aye, the devil to pay—the dance of the ice-dogs in the gulf to-night."

Presently the surf of St. Mary's rock boiled out under their port rail. By then full night had wrapped them round, and the outlines of grim old Weebald, guardian to the southern headland, were but faintly framed in the shadows.

"No harm if we don't see him—we'll know when we lay him abeam by the roar of the swash rushing up the steep side of him. The backwash will all but smother our starb'd rail if we run the course true." And, sure enough, it was the thunderous wintry surf booming up the iron crags, rather than any conventional sailor's means of reckoning, which assured them where the huge rock lay as they shot by the shrouded base.

With Weebald astern there was no longer the worry of navigation in close waters. Thereafter the danger was plain. From Bay of Islands to Cape Ray was no farther than the *Arbiter* had sailed on many a winter's night; a dash, no more, even for a sailing craft through water—if the course were put as the birds fly. But half-way down the coast was Cape St. George, jutting out into the gulf like another little continent, and below that St. Anguille again, ere they could make Cape Ray.

And it was not alone the lengthened distance of the doubling course: the wind that had been blowing fairly from the north for a week was now to the west. Observed the master: "After giving the ice a good shove, it had to haul to head us off. A dead beat all the way. And 'twill be ice to one side of us and the cliffs of the shore to the other. We know where the cliffs are, and, thank the Lord, they can't move. But only the Lord knows where the ice is—or will be. But we'll put her on the northerly tack now, get as far offshore as we can before it gets us"; and so, under pressure of all the canvas her spars would spread, the *Arbiter* bore into the portentous waters of St. Lawrence Gulf.

Night was merging into day, the pale rays of a freezing winter's dawn were uncovering the restless seas, ere they could guess how matters stood in the gulf. From the deck was cold tossing green water as far as a man could see; but from the masthead, where Clancy presently ascended, the waters toward the western horizon were seen to be dotted with pieces of ice. Well the master knew them—little cakes they would be, large as the top of a hatch or the bottom of a dory. No great harm then; but in their wake would be the almost solid stuff, the great fields which were immovable to the power of man as the shore itself.

Despite the threatening outlook, they would have to work farther offshore, or by and by when they put to the southward they would be unable to fetch by Cape St. George. So to the west and north the fast-sailing *Arbiter* continued to beat her way.

In good time they found the young ice as expected, not crowded close, but tossing wide, with plenty of free water between, nowhere sufficiently close-set to stop a hard-driven vessel; and certainly not this vessel, which had come from out of the bay and into the gulf like one running from the fear of death.

The master studied the situation. "We cert'nly can't weather Cape George on the next tack from here. We must get further offshore, further to the west'ard yet. It's the solid stuff we have to watch for now. Go aloft, you Sam, and have an eye out for it."

Up the fore-rigging heaved Sam Leary, humming serenely to the swaying ratlines:

"For when that we see,
'Tis then 'twill be
Off on our heels
And away wi' we!"

"And devil a stop then for anything this side of hell, hah, Sammie?" concluded, most unmetrically, a discursive watch-mate, Gillis by name.

The master was having a reflective mug-up below, when, "Ice-O!" came from aloft. Bolting the meat and gulping the coffee, he piled up on deck. "Solid?"

"No'therly it's solid, but I can't say yet to the west'ard."

The master joined Leary aloft. "You're right, I think, Sammie, but we'll make sure. Hand up the glasses, one of you. Man! but it's a cold draught that spills into a fellow's chest up here!"

He examined the horizon to the northward; a moment and he swept the glasses to the westward. "I'm not too sure it won't head us off, Sammie, if we don't put about soon. Oh, below there! call up the gang to shift the stays'l—we'll be tackin' in a minute. Hurry 'em. This stuff is too handy entirely, though we'll get away at that. But hold! Look, Sammie, look, boy! There—see nothing?"

"A hubbly lump of ice, Skipper?"

"Devil! no, but a dory coated with ice. And a dory means men, or ought to. Frozen? Aye, may be. But, no. No, no-no! they're alive! See 'em now?"

"God! yes, alongside the dory—hauling it over the floe. Must've got caught out."

"That's it. And out all last night, that's sure. And a blessed cold night for men to've been out on an ice-floe. Oh, on deck! Never mind tackin' now. Swing her off half a point and let her go into it."

Under the bow and bottom of the *Arbiter* crowded the young ice as toward the floe she bore. Drawing nearer, it packed yet more thickly about her hull, and the more thickly the ice gathered, the more slowly did she make sail, until from flying in free water, like a gull for home, she was now moving sluggishly as a poled punt on inland waters.

Presently the mounting light of the sun disclosed a little schooner from which the castaways were fleeing. Sam recognized the type at once. "A Newf'undlander, that's sure, Skipper."

"Aye, and a Bay of Islands craft, too, Sammie."

"Bay of Islands," repeated Gillis. "If the traders and politicians only had their way with American vessels there, Skipper—wouldn't it be queer now? Skipper—" but Captain Clancy, the impatient, was sliding to the deck.

"Drive her into it," he ordered the man at the wheel.

There came the time when the *Arbiter* could barely forge ahead, whereupon rose a murmur that she was standing on too long.

"Charity begins at home," growled one particular dissenter.

"True enough, but no need to end it there," retorted the master, and, repeating the inflexible order, "Keep her to it!" to it she was kept.

Shortly came the warning from aloft: "Heading us off every minute to the south'ard, Skipper."

The master nodded, but his expression was not reassuring to the weak-hearted ones.

"Can we get 'em aboard and get away, Skipper, too?"

"Hard telling."

"And it may mean floatin' around here for the Lord knows how long—till spring, maybe."

"Spring?" A faint smile parted his lips. To himself he said: "A damn late spring, boy—long past any Easter resurrection."

Time was certainly precious, but here was something that they were glad to be able to do.

Exhausted, frost-bitten, worn to the last extremity, the crew of the little jack were dragged aboard. A pitiful sight! With hands and faces burned by the frost and eyes that were shrunk to pin-points from long gazing at the glaring ice, they leaned wearily against the rigging, masts, across the house, wherever they could find support.

The master cheered them up. "A good rubbing of ice on your ears, hands, and faces before they can mortify, a mug of hot coffee and a good sleep afterward, and you'll forget all that," and after seeing to it that they were taken below, headed the *Arbiter* for the open water again.

With the wind behind her the vessel now made fairly rapid work of it, despite the hindrance of the slob-ice, which to their anxious eyes seemed to mark the sea half-way to the coast of Newfoundland. That same rugged coast-line lifting above the horizon, as they doubled back, was a tempting sight to many, since they had seen what had happened to hardy men after just one cold night astray on the ice!

"And we might do a lot worse than to run back into the same Bay of Islands we just left and hang up there till next spring." Gillis suggested this to Leary.

"'Sh-h—" Leary ducked his head toward the skipper.

But Clancy had heard. "Go back there to Bay of Islands and let the herring rot in our hold? Let that trader Lackford and his gang that I wouldn't do business with—let him give us the laugh? I'll be damned if I do! More than that, we go back there to Bay of Islands and let the herring rot in our hold, and what 'll happen? We'll be an object-lesson, an example of American failure, for a year again. More than that, we go back there and the owner will lose money. And the owner's got to be considered. We got to win out. But"—he turned to the crew—"for all you're shipped and bound, I want no man to think he's throwing his life away. There's the seine-boat and a sail, and full leave to go. It's moderatin' inshore, smooth water under the lee of the ice now, and the wind that's against us to get home is fair as c'n be for a run into that same Bay of Islands that we left behind us. Now's your chance—your last chance—no more harbor between here and Cape Ray. Who's going?"

Silence reigned, till Leary spoke. "I don't cal'late anybody's hankerin' to quit, Skipper? Are you, Gillis?"

"Me? Why, Sammie!"

"Or you?"

"No, not me!"

"Nor me—nor me!" followed the chorus of quick disclaimers.

"Well, then"—the master spoke here—"we're off—to see what we c'n do for ourselves now."

The *Arbiter* was a notably weatherly vessel, even among a fleet noted for weatherly qualities. In free water she would have winged her way to windward like a skirling gull; but here was no free water. Only by merciless thrashing of sail and sea, by pitiless driving on the master's part, had she managed by this, late afternoon of the day after the rescue, to squeeze abeam of St. George; and St. George was less than half-way down the coast, with the really uncertain waters yet before them. No knowing how far inshore the ice to the southward had drifted.

And it was still drifting; and growing colder; and, in the opinion of everybody, the coldest night of all was now before them, for already the congealing sea, where it lay in little ponds of water among the scattered cakes, was taking on a steadily thickening film, through which the vessel cleft her way with a noise as of a pair of scissors tearing through starched cloth. Not yet enough to check her, but in the increasing coldness—and surely when night was come and the benignant sun no longer mellowed, 'twould be cold indeed—this scum would thicken so rapidly that nowhere would there be left a way of escape for the vessel by morning. So, at least, decided the crew, albeit through all their periods of doubt and inquiry they retained full faith in their leader. "This man, he's never lost us yet," was their boast to the rescued men.

Under the light of the moon—a dim, yellow, scared-looking moon which set early that evening—they saw the vessel come to a full stop, and that despite everything on her drawing full and a gale of wind sweeping down with a wail as of a multitude of banshees across the dotted seas. Later that night they could feel the ice crowding about the vessel. The rescued men, who alone were resting, could plainly hear it grinding against her planking as they lay in the bunks below. "Like it began when our schooner was caught," they declared to Clancy, who, however, did not encourage them to gossip over it.

A night of suspense altogether, and still gray in the east when Clancy went aloft for signs. Everywhere ice. To the east the small ice, to west and north the great sheets. Far away, southward, was open water, but even that clear space the drifting floes promised soon to claim. But hold—here and there in the dawn the master descried lakes of water. "If I could only get her started among them once, I'd make her hop over the places between," he muttered. Some further pondering and he passed the word to hang the dory from the bowsprit and for the men to get into it.

Under the concentrated weight, the men jumping up and down in unison, the ice gave way. Hauling the dory ahead, they repeated that over and over, breaking out thus a clogged channel, through which in the strong breeze the master forced a passage for the vessel. After a hundred repetitions came a hurrah of success. "Clear water!" they hallooed. "No telling how far, but clear water!" and came tumbling back aboard.

With sheets off, Clancy let her have her head, and she, the able *Arbiter,* increasing her speed with every foot of water left behind, went bowling toward the edge of the next floe beyond.

The *Arbiter* was one of the latest of the spoon bow models, with forefoot well cut away. "You couldn't do it with every vessel," explained Clancy. "But with this one—!"

Cr-r-wh! up and on to the ice hopped the *Arbiter,* not cutting knife-like into it as the crew had expected, but riding over it, as if she would stand up on her stern-post and topple over. But no toppling over for her; before she came to that the weight of her hull and cargo told, and through the steel-gray stuff she went crashing.

Again with the wind behind her she went at it, and again she rode over it and down—cr-r-a-a-ck. The noise of them! And a s-p-plas-h! Magnificently the broken cakes fell away to either side, while all about her, from between the ragged edges up through the gaping seams, squished the cold green sea.

"Shootin' the chutes!"

"Or roller-coastin'!"

"Man! but 'twould be the greatest fun alive, if only a fellow could be sure of pulling through at last," observed Gillis. A garrulous lad, Gillis.

The severed cakes were bowling ahead and abeam, the cold brine was spouting far across the frozen surface. "Now we got her started, maybe we c'n keep her going," said Clancy, and, lashed to the masthead that he might not be shaken off, he picked out the open spots for her, till night came, when they worked by instinct, ploughing along slowly, praying the fates to keep them clear of any pocket from which men might not work a vessel out.

Once more the unrolling dawn disclosed solid ice as far as the eye could span. Doomed they certainly were if something did not happen soon. "We got to get out of here." Clancy searched the crawling, frozen plain for signs of hope. There *was* clear water, but like a maddening mirage it lay, with ice now so compact that no human load they could crowd into a dory would break it down; and no chance to drive the vessel on to it.

And yet—what was the good of having ideas and not trying to work them out?—he sent some of the crew to creep out on the ice, cut a hole, and therein set the foretopmast, which he unslung for the purpose. The spar was made fast to the chain cable, which inboard was connected with the windlass.

"Chop the ice away now to give her a start, and then heave away."

To force the vessel through that flinty ice called for the most unwavering effort of all hands. These men were accustomed to furious exertions, but heretofore for comparatively short periods only, two or three or four hours at a time, and always followed by a sweet spell of rest. But this up-and-down sawing! There was something of play to hauling a trawl, underrunning nets, or rowing a dory, or hoisting a sail; in any of that work was a certain measure of rhythm that all strong men enjoy. A fellow might swing in time to any of that, and there was always the opportunity at that to toss arms and shoulders about now and again. But this being cooped and jammed in the bow of the vessel and sawing away, up and down, up and down, and never so much as to feel the deck heave under a man's feet, why, that was what a man might call hard work.

"Galley-slaves," some one suggested.

"Galley-slaves!" snorted Leary. "Never did those loafers have to face anything like this. They had only to sit side by side, nice and sociable, and pull on a long oar in lovely weather, with the warm spiced winds of the Mediterranean Sea being wafted—yes, wafted, I said—through the open ports. Don't tell me! I've read about 'em. While here"—he waved a rampart arm—"here 'tis blasts of frozen air from a frozen pole to cut like razor-edges."

"Aye, and fresh honed after every blast, those same razors."

"Razors? No, but saws—saws with good, able teeth in 'em."

"And claws."

"That's it, claws. And eye-teeth like condemned ice-dogs."

"Aye, the whelps' sons!"

However, even that had an ending, and, clear of that last floe began what they hoped would be the last tack of the most dangerous winter passage that men in sailing craft attempt in all the world, 'tis said. For the west coast of Newfoundland is a cruel coast, sheer cliff, with never an inlet for a vessel in distress to run for between St. George and Cape Ray. Not that they had a mind to run for any harbor. They were at one with the master in that. "It's home we want to get," he bit out, and sent the *Arbiter* along the edge of the fate-driven floe. "No leeway," was his standing command; "grab every foot of water offshore. By and by we'll need it all."

In the discouraging hours there were those who had declared that they cared not whether they lived or died. But not so now, when hope was rosy. There was young Gillis. "We'll make it, after all, don't you think, Sammie?" he inquired of Leary.

"You're the damnedest man for asking foolish questions. How do I know any more than you? Shut up! You know about how far we have to go, how the ice's been driftin', and what the vessel c'n do in this breeze."

Leary's temper betrayed his own doubt. Would they make it? Would they? Could——

"Well, I'm damned!" came softly, almost humorously, from the master.

Only Leary, standing nearest, heard it. He looked, and in a moment saw for himself. No larger than a cart-wheel it was then, whirling with increasing pace, as might a ball down a hill. Leary experimentally inhaled the dampening air, one breath, another, paused meditatively. "Blast it!" he exploded.

By now the crew were awake to this new menace which had taken shape much like a cloud above a powder explosion, and grown as mysteriously, out of itself as it were, much as a flame fed by gas, but opaque and settling down on them calmly, silently, irresistibly, as if it were the sky itself which was dropping, with immense convoluting billows of vapor foreshadowing. Billows? If they were only real billows of the sea which, rolling down and attempting to overpower, and meeting an able vessel and a ready crew, would have to pass on futilely roaring—but these stayed with them!

It was like black night when it fell upon them. Farther than their arms could touch they could not see. Their positions around deck were bespoken by their voices, which resounded curiously, as if they were in different rooms of a building and attempting to carry on conversations through undefined but effective partitions. In their first surprise they yelled unnecessarily loud—all but the master. Slowly, evenly, his tones vibrating for the moment with no more disturbing emotion than surprise, the comforting voice floated out: "What do you think of that now? A while ago I'd've laid even money on our chances."

"And now, Skipper, it's long odds against us?"

They waited for the answer, facing toward the spot where they had last seen him standing. It came, after a pause, in judicial tones, as of one advising them. "Well, no, I wouldn't say that. With a vessel like this one under us and a gang that'll never quit, as I know none of you will, the odds 'd never be against us."

But all nerves were not under such control. One, in his dread, had to cry out, and curiously, like a despairing voice from beyond a wall, it sounded: "And yet blast it, I say, for a black smoke from hell; and blast the devils that brought it!"

For overwrought emotions the master's charity was always large. Well he knew that when men get that way the strongest of them are sometimes like children, and so now he reproved but mildly: "Hush! From hell or Heaven, we'll give it battle. It can't last forever; coming as it did, it can't."

Elbows touching and heads near, bodies close but thoughts far apart, Leary and Gillis leaned over the rail. Unseen by human eyes, but roaring to the winds, the swash swept by beneath them. Above it Leary hung impassive. Not so Gillis. He squirmed nervously. Too young he for philosophic calm. He sought to pierce the void; but to no avail. It was like looking at a curtain of black velvet. A curious new dread began to take hold of him.

Booms ratching, sails straining, blocks creaking, halyards moaning, wind wailing, spray splashing, somewhere above a sun shining and yet not to be seen. Ice to one side—he could hear the sound of that, too, whenever the side of vessel, held closer than usual by the skipper's iron hand, rasped the edge of the floe; ice to one side, the eternal cliffs to the other, and the vessel tearing along like a black-swathed ghost—Lord in Heaven, what would happen!

What could happen? Gillis had to speak, if no more than to hear the sound of somebody else's voice to reassure him he wasn't dead, serving out his penance somewhere in a seaman's purgatory. He simply had to speak. He was no iron-nerved Clancy or widely experienced Leary. If they were to feel the vessel leaping, leaving the earth itself, shooting off into space somewhere, they would but grin, and brace their legs and wait for her to fetch up, wherever 'twould but she'd fetch up. He laid an almost timid hand on Leary's arm.

"Sammie, suppose the skipper's out in his reckonin', what then? A wonderful man altogether, but it's four days since we left the Bay of Islands, and not a chance for an observation since. And the forty zigzag courses we've steered since then, with no mortal man able to say what her speed was at times! And who could figure a vessel's speed and drift in the ice, anyway? 'Tisn't navigation alone, Sammie, that question. A whole collegeful of scientific sharps, a whole bunch of 'em figurin' and pokin' their instruments to the sky at one time, couldn't get it right."

Leary came slowly out of his reverie. "No, Gillie, they couldn't. Only a man that's born to the sea and that's lived all his life on it, that knows it like he knows his own soul, and with that knows all that comes out of the sea, tides and wind and ice, and just now the queer workings of this particular gulf—only a man like that, who knows what no book 'll ever teach, nor, Gillie, what no other man can ever teach him, that knows things about the ocean that he doesn't know he knows, c'n save us. And that's this man, Gillie. No log, no chart, no sights, but no fear, he knows where she is, and he said this vapor'd lift in time to give us a chance; and since he says so, it will."

"But suppose he slips up, or the vessel slips up, and we don't make it, what then?"

"Why, then, after waitin' long enough to make sure it's true, they'll put us in the papers, and that's when you'll hear the good of yourself; and when the likes of you and me hear good of ourselves in the papers, Gillie, we can be sure that it's our 'bituaries we're reading. And—but 'sh-h—listen——" Leary squeezed the younger man's arm. "'Sh-h— Wait—Hear it?"

Gillis did hear it, the surge of the sea against the invisible cliffs, and peered out apprehensively; and drew quick breaths—"M-m, m-m—but it's damn handy to—under our lee, that shore, Sammie!"

Leary nodded.

"And she's rushin' on, Sammie—Lord in Heaven but she's rushin' on—hah, Sammie?"

Leary nodded.

"And where to, Sammie—where to?"

"God! Gillie, how do I know?—to whatever 'tis is waitin' for her, I s'pose."

"And to le'ward, too—Lord in Heaven, Sammie!"

And what was waiting for her? And what was waiting for him? Gillis peered anew at his mate, but Leary had relapsed to his former attitude; chin on hands and elbows on rail, that fateful adventurer was gazing impassively out into the dark.

Gillis sighed impotently. And so a man could—at Sam's age. A fine old age, Sammie's. A man could have lived a lot at thirty-five, but what did a man know of life at twenty-two? And yet Gillis smiled even in his despair—he'd had his great days, too. Back in Bay of Islands was a girl—but let her pass. In Gloucester was a girl. He used to lower his eyes, for all he wanted to look at her, when she passed. And she didn't know; and if she did, it wouldn't matter. Something better than a hand in a fishing-vessel for her. And, after all—with another sigh Gillis admitted it—she was right. The woman that married such a one as he was would be a fool. No; she wasn't for him. And so he'd taken up with that girl in Bay of Islands—'twas of her they sang:

"I know a girl in Calinore,
Vessels sail right by her door;
She has sweethearts by the score,
Never a lock on her front door!"

And the whole fleet would laugh when her name was mentioned. But let that pass. She had a kind word and a warm heart, and she'd kissed him leaving, and said, "Take good care of yourself, b'y."

But if no good woman—and, after all, women weren't the whole of a man's life—there'd be good men left to say a word for him. If 'twould be no more than a word on the corner some windy day, when, with heads down, a couple of old shipmates bumped into each other passing. "So the *Arbiter's* lost," one would say. "Aye, and did you know any of 'em?" "Aye, I did," the first one would say then. "There was—" and maybe his name would be mentioned, with a good word, too. Or maybe 'twould be when a couple of his old chums would meet in some barroom and, filling their glasses, one would say, "Well, that was tough on young Gillis, warn't it?—went down on the *Arbiter*." "Yes," the other might say, "damn tough." And the first one then, raising his glass, would say softly, "Well, God rest his soul, here's to him." Or better yet—the tears were starting in Gillis's eyes—perhaps 'twould be some bad night, in the forec's'le of some vessel on the fishing-grounds, on the Western Banks or on Flemish Cap, or wherever it was, maybe 'twould be his old dory-mate, Alec Corning—next to Leary the man he liked best. Maybe Alec, coming off watch, after hauling off his boots and oilskins, would draw out his pipe for a little drag afore he turned in, and maybe after he'd got lighted up and everything drawing—himself setting back on the lockers fine and comfortable—he'd remember and say—or maybe somebody lying in a bunk, not yet asleep, or the cook, nearly always awake, would bring up his name, and Alec would say: "Aye, lost with Tommie Clancy in the *Arbiter*. And too bad, too. I knew him well. A good man was Arthur Gillis. I mind we were dory-mates once." And maybe Alec would go on: "Fishin' off Sable Island, we were once, off the No'theast Bar, in the *Mornin' Glory* with Saul Elwell, and our dory was capsized. It looked bad, I tell you. Six hours we hung on, and"—here maybe Alec would stretch the truth a bit for the sake of his old chum—"never a whimper out of him; a young fellow, too; never a word of fear till the vessel bore down and got us. And maybe——"

A hand shook him. Leary's voice said something. Gillis looked about. What was that?—and what here—men's forms moving around deck? He looked about. The black vapor was thinning to a dirty brown.

Leary poked him again. "Didn't the skipper say it would? Look!" he roared; and Gillis, looking, saw with joy what at another time would have chilled his blood. From out of the haze on their port bow was staring a wall of gray rock.

The master swung her away in time, and the danger that might have ended their lives for them was forgotten the moment after. They were grateful for the sight of that particular cliff. It served as a landmark, told them where they were. Cape Ray was two miles away. "Nothing off," ordered the master, and the *Arbiter* was headed a hair-line nearer the ice. And so she flew on, giving way only as the edge of the relentless ice-floe forced her.

A mile now, a terribly long mile, and yet the *Arbiter* was flying. Never probably had she carried her rail through water so smoothly. Three-quarters, half a mile. Shortening, surely, but also the gap was narrowing, and time was whitening with age as they watched. They gathered in groups and gambled mentally on it, knowing well the stake in the gamble. Home, wife, and children—life—if they won out; a booming surf, a vessel's timbers crunching on the sharp-pointed rocks—and they didn't need to be too fine-pointed, either, to do the job—themselves crushed, beaten, their people at home probably not knowing it for weeks, if they lost!

Would it be called two cable-lengths now? W-w-well, yes, two lengths—hardly more than that. But that gap ahead had shrunk till the space seemed no wider than the vessel's deck. A narrow gauntlet for sixteen lives to run!

A narrow lane ahead now, no more than a flumelike slit of water between ice and rocks. And down that roaring flume the *Arbiter* leaped. Already detached pieces of ice were drifting across the path, catching and breaking in the jagged points of the rocks at the base of the cliffs. Stray pieces of hard ice were knocking furiously against the *Arbiter's* planking, against even her lee, the shore, side.

They were in doubt as to one particular object that lay exactly in their course. Was it a piece of white rock or partially submerged ice? There was no room to turn out. Rock or ice, they would have to take it. If it was loose ice, well and good; if a rock, well——

"Let her go for it!" It was Leary to the wheel, and Clancy to the mast-head. Leary's breath was coming in gulps. His eyes were shining. "Christ! but I call this racing!"

"Racing sure enough, Sammie, and more than money or a cup depending."

The *Arbiter* leaped for the doubtful obstruction under her bow. Cr-r-r-u-unch!

"Ice!"

"No—rock!"

"No—ice, by the Lord!"

A lump of ice it was; and on swept the *Arbiter*, with now the dreaded headland abeam. On, on it was under her quarter. "Go it, you jade—you beauty—go it!" One more long, lo-o-n-g breath and it was under her stern.

They looked back, but no longer was a lane there. The way by which they had come was bridged over by a crunching mass of flinty ice, which tossed tumultuously as it came, and, reaching shore, piled with tremendous concussions against the sides of the granite cliffs.

"Skipper"—from one who had been looking over the bow—"d'y' know but the protection plankin' on her stem's all chewed up—looks like a layer of shredded pine, Skipper."

"So? Like some kind o' breakfast-food, heh? Well"—he dropped from rail to deck, and below, aloft, outboard he gazed—"well"—this slowly—"a good vessel, and needed all her oak plankin'. Aye, a good vessel," and, hesitatingly, as if it might be construed to mean self-praise, "and a good job."

"A *damn* good job," affirmed Leary.

But it was Gillis who leaped an ecstatic yard into the air and, cracking his heels, emitted: "Ain't we the dogs, though? Hah, what, ain't we? No 'bituary notices for us this time, hah, Sammie?"

"And now"—the master turned to the rescued Newfoundlanders—"we'll run into Port-aux-Basques and land you. And when you get back to Bay of Islands you c'n pass the word that we did clear the ice, and then——" He halted for sheer weariness.

"And then, Skipper?"

"And then——" Interminable watches had driven Clancy's eyes far back into their sockets, but the unquenchable light, if smoldering, was there, and now that light flashed out like a flame from cavernous depths. "Then"—but the voice broke and he could only whisper it huskily—"home!" The last trace of the iron manner faded with the thought, and over his face came a smile as soft as a bread-and-buttered baby's. "Home, boy, home!" and with it caught the capering Gillis a playful clout that sent him from break to house.

# XXV

## ROLLIN' HOME THE MORNIN' GLORY

Old Saul Elwell was standing on the cap-log of Duncan's Wharf, gazing meditatively on the ancient *Morning Glory,* when Captain Larry Martin drifted along.

"What you ruminatin' about, Saul?"

"Been a thinkin', Larry, on whether I ought t' haul up this vessel o' mine for the winter or send her another trip somewheres."

"Where somewheres?"

"M—m, Cape Breton. Been offered great freight rates to haul a couple o' hundred tons o' coal from Sydney."

"Two hundred tons of coal? In her? Her old bottom'd fall out. She was a good vessel in her day, Saul, but——"

"Her day? Lemme tell you, Larry, some great vessels was sailed in her day out o' Gloucester. Didn't have so many whatnots and didoes, warn't so sharp-built nor so fancy-rigged as the vessels nowadays, but they held the sea."

Larry grinned: "Most of them holdin' it yet, I guess—the bottom of it, Saul."

"So? This one o' mine's still afloat, you'll notice, provin' mebbe she's got some qualities some folks ain't never suspected in her. For one thing she c'n carry a cargo. Nothin' like the same deck length to her, but that old gal'll roll home right now with's big a load as some o' the new big ones. Where's Ritchie Proctor this mornin'?"

"Dunno. Prob-ly takin' a walk with his girl. If he's not he ought to be—a fine day as it is."

"Cal'latin' to get married, is he, Larry?"

"Let him get to be a master of a vessel and I don't think he'd wait long, Saul."

"Where'll he get a vessel this time o' year?"

"I dunno."

"How about my vessel for him?"

"Haulin' coal from Sydney?"

"Coal from Sydney or—m—herrin' from Newfoundland."

"Herrin'? Frozen or in pickle?"

"Frozen, I hope, Larry. But s'pose it's pickled, then what?"

"Pickled herrin'? In bulk? An' a winter passage from Newfoundland in that old wreck?"

"Why not—if he's careful?"

"He wants to be damn careful."

Larry Martin drifted off; and by and by, bouncing down the wharf came young Captain Richard Proctor.

"Hello, Captain Saul?"

"How do, Richie. Ashore for the winter, be you?"

"Not if I can get any kind of a chance."

"Glad to hear it. No real fisherman stays ashore winters—not when he's young. Anybody can go to sea summers. Takes winter on this North Atlantic Ocean to try a man. Got your master's papers I hear."

"I got my papers, Captain Saul, but——"

"But no vessel, that it?"

Richard smiled. "That's it, Captain Saul. Guess the owners think I'm too young."

"Now bein' young is only part of it, Ritchie. It's mostly you ain't never had no vessel. Owners don't like to trust new, big vessels to young skippers who ain't never proved theirselves. The first p'int is to get a vessel, an' then show 'em what you're made of. No doubt you've thought many a time on the sort o' vessel you'd like to go master of?"

Richard had thought often enough of the sort of vessel he would like to go master of. One of the new, big ones, she would be. Fast and able. Oh, able!—one of the kind that would walk into a gale of wind, slap him in the face and say: "Here I come! Hold me back if you can, you blusterin' blowhard!"

He came out of his bright revery to hear old Saul saying: "Owners ain't buildin' new an' expensive vessels for young skippers, who ain't never been tried out."

Richard nodded. He was now the reasoning, everyday Richard, back on the cap-log of Duncan's Wharf again, and he knew that old Saul had said it.

"What say to goin' master o' the *Morn'n' Glory?* Don't crinkle up your nose too much all to once. Think it over."

Richard thought it over. If anybody but Saul had been the *Morning Glory's* owner he would have said no, and said it promptly. But there stool old Saul with his rheumatism and his cane. Never again would old Saul take his vessel to sea. Always somebody else would now have to take her for him; and Saul had always been his good friend. He had been his father's friend, too, before he was lost. So now he heard himself saying: "I'll be glad to take her, Captain Saul, and you're good to give me the chance. Anything special in mind for her, had you?"

"Had two things. One was this famine o' coal. Amazin' freight rates bein' offered for coal. What say to haulin' a load o' coal from Sydney?"

Richard could have said a bookful; but all he did say was: "Wherever you say to go with her I'll go, Captain Saul, but dirty, black coal going into her nice, clean, salt hold—is that doing right by her?"

"I didn't think ye'd like it. Didn't like the notion myself, but the sure profit was there. Here's the other thing: Tain't alone a coal famine. There's this drouth o' herrin' in the market. You saw the herrin' fleet sailin' for the Bay of Islands on the Gulf Coast o' Newfoundland? Now, s'posin' no herrin' strikes in on the Gulf Coast, an' s'posin they do strike in more to the east'ard—into Placentia Bay, say?"

"Got word of something, Captain Saul?"

"John Rose, o' Placentia Bay, telegraphs he got a few in his nets on'y last week. Took John an' his crew off of his vessel, she sinkin' under him on the Grand Banks one time, an' he ain't never forgot it. John'll save all the herrin' he c'n get hold of an' freeze 'em an' keep 'em for me for as long as there's a chance of a vessel o' mine comin' to take 'em. Now, then! Here's th' packin' plant people sayin' they'll pay fancy prices for the first cargo o' Newfoundland herrin' arrives here. S'posin' you take the *Mornin' Glory* for a trip to Placentia Bay? No beatin' frozen herrin' for lively ballast. Give her fifteen hund'ed bar'ls o' frozen in her hold an' the old *Glory* 'd come bouncin' home, wouldn't she? What say, Richie?"

"I'll take her."

"Good! But Richie?"

"Yes, Captain Saul."

"There's a chance John Rose'll have them herrin' in salt pickle 'stead o' frozen. Pickled or frozen they'll suit the packin' folks, but I guess I don't have to tell you, Richie, what a terr'ble logy cargo pickled herrin' in bulk makes. A winter passage from Newfoundland with a cargo o' pickled herrin'—it ain't what I'd pick for the *Glory*, Richie. Between ourselves, Richie, *Glory's* growin' old, an' I dunno but I'd ruther see ye comin' home with a load o' coal from Sydney."

Richard knew for himself that coal would be the safer cargo, but thoughts of this, his first command—new, colorful, surprising thoughts were already warming his brain.

"Better let me decide after I get there—don't you think, Captain Saul? I'll bring her home with a load of something."

"I know ye will. 'Tain't in your blood not to, but if it's salt herrin', don't force the old *Glory* too hard. When'll you be ready to put out?"

"Any minute. Now, if you say."

"That's the way to talk. We'll ship a crew an' you ketch this s'utherly an' you'll mebbe be able to lay a good piece of the road in her wake afore it blows out."

The *Morning Glory* caught the predicted southerly and made —for her—a notable passage to Placentia Bay, where Richard found John Rose with herring waiting for his old friend Saul's vessel; but they weren't frozen herring.

"Sorry it be, but so it be," said John, adding that the wind had been from the south for two weeks past. Such a spell of unseasonable warm weather it was as no man had seen for many years in Placentia, and curious enough, too, if report from the nor'ard and west'ard be true, it had been naught but ice making on the Labrador shore. Aye, b'y, ice. Even then drifting down the Gulf it be. But in Placentia Bay naught but mild weather, and so, naught but herring in salt pickle for his old friend Saul.

Richard looked over John Rose's herring; and fine, fat herring they were. He told John Rose that he would take them.

"Will 'ee take them all, b'y?"

"Every last one of them, if I can find room."

They made a noble cargo when they were all aboard. John Rose hailed all of Folly Cove to the high headland to witness that it was the noblest cargo of herring that had ever put out of Placentia Bay. A wonderful, grand cargo if the old *Glory* could but make Gloucester with it.

Decks to the water she was. Staggering out from Folly Cove she made for the open Bay; and rolling from side to side on her round bottom, she left the Bay for the open sea. She was already like a rock in the water, every sea breaking fair over her.

There were those of the crew who prophesied one day of hard weather outside for her before she ran to harbor somewhere. They spoke in discreet tones, as if not wishing the skipper to hear; but he heard, as they intended him to.

To hint to a young skipper that his first vessel would not prove equal to what he had set for her to do is about as good a way as any other to drive him to prove that she is equal to it.

He did not run to harbor her first day outside; nor on her second day; and here it was her third day out and she hadn't run to harbor anywhere yet. Richard had the wheel. Archie Gillis and Sam Leary were the men on watch, both clinging to the weather forerigging, their heads together, like a pair of gossips.

And gossiping they were, at that very moment discussing the chances—there being no weak soul around to be affrighted—of the old packet making Gloucester with her cargo.

Richard himself was beginning to wonder if she would make it. To the wheel he stood now, easing her when he had to, driving her when he could. For ten hours now he had not left the wheel, not even to go forward for a cup of coffee.

No law or custom called upon him to be sticking to the wheel. He had four or five good helmsmen among the crew; Archie and Sam, with a long experience behind them, were both possibly better wheelsmen than himself; yet he chose to cling to the wheel. Why was he staying there?

Why shouldn't he stay there if he chose? would have been his retort to that. Other skippers had stood great watches to the wheel in heavy weather. Captain Larry Martin only two winters before had stood fourteen hours to the wheel, with never less than water to his waist and sometimes to his chest. Beating the fleet home with the first load of frozen herring from the Bay of Islands he was. A great passage—men talked of it yet.

Why did he stand there? One or two of his crew would doubtless have said that he stayed there because he didn't know any better. Sam or Archie would have said that he was staying there because he was a young skipper, and young skippers were notorious for wanting to do everything themselves. Saul Elwell would have said that he was still to the wheel because it was in his five generations of fishing blood to hang on the longest when the going was the roughest.

To himself Richard was beginning to admit a little weariness. Steering a stubborn vessel in a strong wind and high running sea was a strain; especially when a man had to keep constant watch out for the bad combers. He saw a high one coming now. "Wa-a-tch out, Sam! Watch out, Archie!" he yelled, thinking they were growing careless with their heads together.

Those wary veterans weren't too careless; before Richard was half through yelling they were safe up in the weather rigging.

Richard drove down the wheel to bring her head on to the sea; but she was naturally slow in stays and her logy cargo had made her slower. She tried, but it wasn't in her old frame, to lift to it. Tumbling over her forequarter came the green-white hill of water. It filled her waist, rolled up on to her break. It rolled over the cabin house, over the wheel box, over Richard's head. He knew he was going under, deep under; but his job was to stay there and take it. He felt the surge of it under water trying to sweep him from the wheel.

It passed on and she came heaving heavily up out of it, he still holding the wheel. He shook his oilskins, stamped his boots, shimmied his head to clear the water from his eyes, squinted at the binnacle box, and rolled her on her course again.

"Better lash yourself, hadn't you, Richie?" called out Archie Gillis.

Sam Leary had suggested that same thing before this, and it had been Richard's pride to say no, he not wishing to let on that he thought things were getting serious. But that last sea was certainly a rough rider. He seized the line that Archie brought to him, looped it from shoulder to waist, and let Archie secure it to the weather-bitt.

"She don't answer to her helm quick as she might," he explained to Archie, and at once wished he hadn't said it. It was like belittling his own vessel; he hurried to add: "She's all right, I'm probably getting tired. Watch out! Wa-a-tch out! Grab something, Archie!"

The experienced, wily Archie stopped to grab nothing. The cabin companionway was too handy. He slid back the companion-hatch, jumped down inside, pulling the slide after him as he jumped. Sam Leary had remained at his perch in the rigging, and from there he now viewed the oncoming sea. "A good one," shouted Sam. "A jeezly good one," he amended an instant later, and with calm agility climbed four ratlines higher.

Richard gave thanks that he was lashed when he saw this one coming at him. It was the biggest comber he had seen in all his young sea life. The biggest and whitest! And the hissing roar of it!

A whistling squall rode down the steep slopes of it. He hurried desperately to meet the squall. He feared for his foresail. An old sail, the foresail. Even as it rolled over him, burying him far under, and he trying to guess how much longer before he would come up, he was saying to himself: "There won't be a rag left of that fores'l!"

When he did come up and had spat out the excess salt water his first look was for the foresail. He would have been almost disappointed to find the foresail unharmed. He wasn't disappointed. From the boom upward the foresail had been split and now it was splitting across.

War-r-ip and war-rup! it went. When it could split no further, it took to waving its shameless tail ends to the black-faced sky.

More than her foresail was gone. They had carried two dories lashed over the fore-hatch. They had been double-griped and turned bottom up. All that Richard saw of them now was the painter and a piece of one dory's bow washing inboard and overboard across the lee rail.

The cabin hatch slid back, and Archie emerged. Richard gave him the wheel and passed him the lifeline. He was to keep her head to it while he got all hands on deck to tie up the remnants of the foresail. He went into the waist to oversee the job. He had to yell to make himself heard above slatting canvas and the surging seas. "Faster on that downhall!" he was shouting—"there'll be another coming along any minute. There'll be—here's one now—keep an eye on this one! Never mind the sail—watch out!"

The men busy with the sail seemed to be seeing nothing, hearing nothing, but the slatting canvas. A great fear gripped Richard. He foresaw men being washed over the side; and he in his first command sailing up Gloucester harbor, his flag to half-mast. He jumped among them shouting. Those who heard him and understood, shouted warnings, oaths, entreaties to the others.

"Hang on!"

"Blast the old witch—whoever let her come to sea!"

"Blast her rotten bones—hang on!"

They clutched at the slatting stiff canvas, at the wet half-frozen reef points, at the rigid fore-sheet, at anything they could clutch, peering around at the same time to see would she be able to make it.

"She'll head to it."

"That's the girl!"

"She will, she won't!"

"The lazy whelp! Whoever sent her to sea! Whoever——"

Richard saw Archie striving manfully to force the wheel down. Knowing how slow she was to act he started aft to help Archie. He had reached the break when he caught a fresh, sidewise glimpse of the oncoming sea. It was coming at her almost abeam. He had thought that other last sea the biggest he had ever seen—but this one! High as the crosstrees it was! A roaring mountain of white suds! Boiling white soapsuds—nothing else! It was a terror! And traveling!

He wasted no more time looking at it. One leap landed him in the saddle of the mainmast. Up the mainmast he started by way of the hoops. He was reaching for a hoop, one hand in the air, when the sea struck. He felt himself driven against the mast, then swept away from the mast and rolled over and over against the mainsail.

Into the belly of the mainsail he could feel himself being tossed. He reached wide with both arms. One hand fetched up against a piece of rope. He gripped it, squeezed it, clung to it.

The sea passed on. He had hold of a reef-point. The sail began to shake in the wind, filling and backing, threatening to throw him down onto the deck. He gripped the reef-point with both hands and looked down. Archie had been swept from the wheel to the lee scuppers, but he was now hauling himself back to the wheel by the life line.

Richard could see no better way for him to reach the deck than to slide down the side of the mainsail; so he slid. The sliding was good. He hit the mainboom with his boot heels, bounded from the boom to the cabin house, and from the house to the deck, his boot heels hitting the deck with a fine, hearty thump.

His whizzing descent to the deck cheered everybody up. They counted heads. All were present except the cook, and he was accounted for. They could hear him, gathering his scattered pots and kettles, and swearing up through a thin slit in the fo'c'sle hatch.

A quiet had followed the big sea, as if the mighty ocean, exhausted by his prodigious exertions, had stopped to get his breath back. The quiet gave Richard a chance to look about him. "We've pumped tons of pickle out of her since she left the Bay—she should be livelier, especially aft," he confided to Sam Leary.

"You don't s'pose she's leakin' somewheres," hinted Sam.

"Maybe she is. You look below aft. I'll try the pumps up here."

Blackish water with an oily scum to it, came gushing out of the pumps; which was as it should be, that being pickle from her bilge. But soon it was all clean, white stuff—no end of it; which was not as it should be.

"She must be leaking all of a thousand strokes," Richard put this to Archie as to one who, like Sam, was older and wiser than himself in such matters.

"Fifteen hundred I'd say, if you're askin' me," said Archie.

Sam Leary just then stuck his head out of the cabin to shout: "I guess that last sea started something. Look below here, Richie."

Richard looked below. Down in the run under the cabin floor the water was bubbling noisily.

Richard worked his way down into the run. He found the leak, an open seam as long as his arm and wide enough to shove his hand through. It was like a geyser, the water spouting up through it.

Richard got out a suit of underwear from his locker and stuffed it into the seam. Sam found a lump of tar in the lazaretto. He melted the tar on the cabin stove. Richard poured tar into the crevices and nailed short battens over all. So that leak was attended to.

It had been cold lying cramped up down under the run, tons of cold sea water pouring up over him, when Lord knows he had had enough water poured over him before that. He went to rummage in his locker for further dry underwear. He found none; that is, none that was dry. He grinned. Perhaps just as well. He would only soon be all soaked through again.

The word came then that the cook had discovered a leak in the fo'c'sle. Richard went forward, where the cook met him with an anxious face. "It's under the fo'c'sle run, skipper, an' I got a ton an' a half o' coal stored there."

"A ton and a half? Let's see. Where we going to shovel a ton and a half of coal? We could shovel it up on deck, I suppose, Cook."

The cook was a tough old sea-gull, the miraculous survivor of half a dozen wrecks. "Shovel it on deck and let it wash overboard?" he wailed. "You wouldn't do that, would you, skipper? What'll I do for cookin' an' no coal? How'll I get the crew their hot grub without no coal? Winter time and no hot grub! Cripes, skipper! An' no coal for the cabin fire to dry out the after-gang after a wet watch? Now, skipper!"

"I thought you were worrying about the leak."

"Me worryin'? I been forty-five winters fishin'. Fine time o' life for me to be worryin'. I'm worryin' about havin' no coal to cook with. I'm no canned goods cook, skipper. I got enough fresh meat left on ice to last us to Gloucester. I shipped to cook reg'lar vittles for a crew o' men. How'll I cook an' no coal?"

The man was so passionately in earnest that Richard gave in to him. "All right, Cook. Keep your coal. It's probably not so much of a leak, and we can keep the pumps manned if we have to."

Richard was reaching to ascend the ladder when he heard a growl from the forepeak. There was a mumbled something about a leaky vessel and capsizing, and then—this clearly enough spoken: "When I came off watch just afore daybreak this mornin' I could see Coffin's Light ahead. If it warn't so thick we'd find it abeam of us now. A handy harbor inside Coffin's. With this wind she'd lay an easy course to Coffin's."

Richard was young enough, and supersensitive enough, to believe that such a hint wouldn't have been offered to an old and tried skipper. He turned back from the ladder: "We left Placentia Bay with a load of herring for Gloucester, not Coffin's Light. Gloucester we're bound for"—his voice cooled and hardened—"and for Gloucester I'm keeping her."

The fo'c'sle hatch had been slid back, and Sam Leary and Archie Gillis were coming below from off watch. Penniless and penitent after a week's spree they had come down to Duncan's Wharf to ship in some vessel, any vessel for anywhere. Richard had never seen them before, nor they him, but old Saul knew them well: "A pair o' roisterers ashore," whispered Saul, "I wouldn't hire them to stand by a baby carriage ashore, but AA1 out to sea! Sign 'em, Richie." Richard had signed them and found them fully up to Saul's certificate—skilful, hardy, never weary, all courage and loyalty to himself and the vessel.

They had heard his last words and Richard had a boyish dread of such real seagoers thinking that he was swollen with a young skipper's pride, bull-headed to have his own way on his first trip. Waiting for them to come below, he spoke again: "I'm driving this vessel because I'm thinking of old Saul

Elwell. Before this he's got word from John Rose of our leaving with a cargo of herring. Can't you see him—you can, Archie, and you, Sam, I know—waiting on the dock for his vessel to show up? This vessel is his living. Without this vessel it would be some old sailor's home for him. I could run into the nearest harbor, yes, and put her up on the railway to be calked, and have her herring hoisted out and have it shipped home. I could do that, yet, at Saul's expense, and while I'm doing it let some other vessel with a load of herring go driving on by to Gloucester—three or four of them perhaps—and take the first of the market from us. I could, but I won't. I'm laying no easy course for any harbor along the road. Gloucester's her port, and Gloucester she'll make if all hands have to turn to and man the pumps night and day all the way."

Old Ocean had evidently caught a fresh breath; the seas were thundering across her deck again. Richard hurried up the ladder to watch his vessel.

The cook, waiting only for the hatch to shut behind his skipper, said softly: "In every vessel that ever I was in there was always one man scared to death he was goin' to be lost afore ever he left the dock."

"What's it now, Cook?" There had been no table set that day—no dishes would stay on the table—and so, coffee in one hand, a hunk of meat and bread in the other, one leg braced against the foremast, the other against a step of the deck ladder, Sam Leary was having a mug-up for himself. "Who's it, or what's it now, Cook?"

"Oh, some hero in the forepeak thinks she's goin' to be capsized."

Sam peeked around the foremast toward the peak. It was too dark to see who was there, but he could aim his voice at the dark spot, and he did: "Have no fear, whoever you are, for'ard there—she'll not capsize. Every rag she's got may fly to heaven, every spar she's got may go over the side, and every old plank of her open wide and let her drop to hell, but she won't capsize. Why? Because she's too deep in the water for any sea to get a fair wallop at her. She may run herself under and stay under," continued Sam's soothing, judicial voice—"and she may be smothered by high seas breaking over her, but ease your fears, whoever you are in the forepeak, capsizin' won't be her end this passage. No, sir!"

"Ho, boy!" The fo'c'sle floor leaped heavily up and then crash-h it came down again, upsetting Archie Gillis as he reached for his coffee. "Ho, boy, ho! He must be puttin' her on her way again, hah, Sam?"

"Sure. An' why not? Go it, you old hag, go it! Who wants to be loafin' along the road and a bonus waitin' us if we're first home with the herrin'. You, Archie?"

"Not me. Drive her, I say. The sooner we're in the sooner it'll be us to the Anchorage for a bottle or two of beer, hah, Sam?"

"Dark beer," amended Sam. "Dark Bavarian beer."

Shifting lifelines at the wheel, shifting stations forward, making the deck through rapidly slid hatches and dropping below with the same quick caution—so throughout that day the crew came and went, and throughout that day Richard stayed on deck to watch his vessel.

The going became no easier. Thirty minutes of every hour were needed to keep her pumped out, the men at the pumps working with lifelines about them to keep them from being washed overboard or battered about the deck. Full night saw no let-up to the whistling squalls, the high, rushing seas.

Next day brought no betterment; and once in the night they heard the roar of surf close aboard. No light flashed to tell them whereabouts they were; but that it was Nova Scotia somewhere to the eastward of Cape Sable Richard knew. Hurriedly he tacked ship for offshore waters again.

Gray dawn brought a little easement. Increasing daylight saw a noticeable improvement; by noon the wind hauled so that they could square away and let her run before it.

Running before the wind was the *Morning Glory's* best, a man might say, her only point of sailing. Richard let her run, she rolling high and rolling low before it, he gazing on her with increasing respect. There is a phrase among Gloucester fishermen—"a father with his first baby, a young skipper with his first vessel!" An old wagon she was, and he knew it by now, but she was his first command and she was coming gallantly through it.

"I think she can stand the gaff-topsail," he confided to Archie, who agreed with him that perhaps she could.

They gave her the main topsail.

She stood up to it.

"I think she can stand more sail yet. If the foresail wasn't split I'd give her that, but she's got a big staysail. We'll give her that," said Richard.

They gave her the staysail, setting it low down to the deck to do the foresail's work.

She stood up under the staysail.

She was no thing of beauty, but she had her sturdy charms. Richard gave his eyes the joy of her deep-laden hull, her swelling sails. He watched her, she breasting up her round bows to the rising billows and easing them down into vast hollows. "Wind-torn, sea-swept, planks loose, and the decks in the water, but look at her!" he shouted to Archie.

"A great old girl! A damned old wonder!" admitted Archie; and not Archie alone. Men who had been having nothing but vile words for her on all the hard road from Placentia were now praising her high. Even the leak which the growling one had feared—they were keeping up with it, and what harm a leak while they could keep up with it?

Wind enough there was left to try her canvas, and sea enough to pile the white water high above her round bows, to send the solid water the length of her deck when deep down she plunged; but wind and sea were moderating steadily. And more than that; the scudding low clouds were breaking, the bright sun was shining in spots on the tumbling waters, on her swashing decks, on her black topsides when up they heaved from the white-crested seas.

It was a fine, bracing winter day. A clear night followed the fine day; and after the night the sun edged up, sharp-edged and red astern. Another fine day. Could a man help feeling good? Richard sent Sam Leary aloft to look for Thacher's lights. He went forward himself to shave and wash up and so be the sooner ready to go ashore after the vessel tied up.

He had shaved and was washing up, gossiping cheerfully with the cook, when a voice came down the open companionway: "Sam's raised Thacher's dead ahead."

"That's good," Richard peeked at the clock. Eight o'clock. They would be docked by one o'clock, by half past sure if the wind held.

"Sam's raised something else," continued the voice from the companionway. "Two vessels astern. Gloucestermen. The *Iroquois* and *Apache* by the look of 'em, Sam says."

The *Iroquis* and *Apache?* From the Bay of Islands' fleet!

"They're deep loaded, Sam says."

Deep loaded, too? Richard hurried on deck and climbed aloft to have a look for himself.

They were the *Apache* and *Iroquois,* no mistaking them now. "Looks as though they must've got a load of herrin' in spite of all that Placentia talk of ice coming down the St. Lawrence Gulf, don't it, Sam?"

Sam was glowering at the vessels astern: "Let them have their load. We'll beat 'em in. No vessel ever built—I don't care how new and sharp they are—can beat this one into Gloucester now. If Gloucester lay to wind'ard I'd say yes, but runnin' afore it—no."

Richard, thoroughly comforted, turned to leave the mast-head. He had let himself well down into the rigging, having a look with every ratline, fisherman habit. The two vessels astern were still the only craft in sight. Happening to glance toward the mast-head he saw that Sam was squinting seriously toward the southern quarter.

"See anything more, Sam?"

Sam squinted down at him, from him to the crew on deck, from the crew to the vessels astern. "Maybe you'd better come up and have a look yourself?"

Richard reascended to the mast-head. He followed the line of Sam's outstretched arm, and made out a distress signal flying in the rigging of a schooner. Next he noticed that her hull set low—too low—in the water, and that a boat was alongside, as if ready for her crew to step into it.

Richard shot a quick glance back at the vessels astern, and then looked ahead as if estimating the distance to Gloucester.

Sam, eyeing him curiously, broke in with: "If they can sail a boat at all, they ought to make the shore hereaway in a few hours."

Richard shook his head. "Maybe they could, Sam, but it's no use. She must be leaking to be so low in the water, and you know how the sea can sweep the decks of a logy, leaking vessel. That boat may be stove in, too. You know how our two dories went. No use, Sam. Some other vessel is going to land the first load of Newfoundland herring this season in Gloucester. We'll stand down to her."

"I waited before reportin' her," explained Sam to Archie, "thinkin' of old Saul and what it'd mean to him. It was an awful temptation not to see her, but what in hell else could I do? I gave him a good alibi about them bein' able to make the shore in their boat, but he said no. I knew he'd say no, of course, because what in hell else could he do, either?"

"O' course. O' course. Hard luck you saw her at all, Sam."

"The hard luck was in somebody else not seein' her first."

They were nearing the disabled vessel. She turned out to be a schooner from the Provinces, old as the *Morning Glory* herself, but with less adequate gear and a small crew. Their small boat was an unfit thing wherein to sail for the shore. They were a grateful crew when they found themselves aboard the *Morning Glory*.

"I should never have put to sea in her," explained her captain, "but they tempted me with an offer of five dollars a ton to carry coal from Sydney to Boston. We met bad weather and—well, there she is!"

There she was, sinking as they looked at her. The shipwrecked men watched her sink with eyes only for her. The *Glory's* crew watched her sink with eyes diverted to two big deep-laden schooners winging across the northern horizon on their joyous road to Gloucester.

The shipwrecked men were hungry. Richard led them to the fo'c'sle, where the cook took them and fed them with lashings of hot grub and hot coffee and tales of shipwrecks that he had been in. He hung over them as if they were all brothers. They proved the wisdom of not throwing away coal to stop a little leak. Also he held them up as specimens to a growling man in the forepeak. "I always said wrecks ain't so bad after a man gets used to them. Me, I've been wrecked four times, an' look at me! An' look at these plump 'n' healthy 'n' happy lads now!" crowed the cook.

Leaving the rescued crew to the capable care of the cook, Richard betook himself to the break of the deck. He walked the deck alone; not at all bitter, but just a bit wistful. Saving life is the high service of the sea. Richard knew that he wouldn't have sailed on by that wreck for the glory and profit of a dozen first loads of herring—no man with a heart would; but old Saul was doubtless even then looking out from Duncan's Wharf for a sight of his *Morning Glory*. And looking out he would see two vessels of the Bay of Islands fleet come driving in with deep loads of herring and he would wonder where his own vessel was. She had left Placentia days ago—where was she now?

It was all the luck of the sea, and great luck that some vessel was there to take them off, but of what help to Saul? And what a great thing for himself if he hadn't had to turn out, he the young skipper first home with his first vessel. Such an old hooker as she was, too!

And there was Natalie. Whether he made out well or ill on his first trip as skipper, Natalie would be loving him just the same, but no harm in doing a thing now and then to make a woman proud of her man.

However—Richard sighed for the tenth or twentieth time—the word of the rescue would thrill her. And old Saul would probably say: "Well, Richie, you ain't fust in but ye didn't disgrace the vessel—I'll say that for ye." Some consolation in that.

The *Morning Glory* was now broad-reaching up to the Gloucester breakwater. He could see the two Bay of Islands vessels, they to anchor in the stream, their decks already deserted. Their crews by now were happily ashore with no further thought of a late or early market to worry them.

The *Morning Glory* rolled her heavy way up the harbor. Richard looked for Saul; all hands were looking for Saul, as the vessel headed in for Duncan's slip.

And there he was, stumping down the wharf to meet them. A great old Saul! Scowling! Not a bit. Down-hearted? If he was he gave no sign. He was even smiling.

"He don't smile easy. He's setting us an example!" said Richard to Sam. "Well, if he can smile, I guess we can."

He smiled up at Saul, who from the cap-log continued to smile down on the vessel. Richard leaped on to the cap-log and they shook hands.

"*Apache's* gang just went into Duncan's office," said Saul. "Said you was comin' an' that you must've druv her to get her as far along as you did. An' did great rescue work, they said this mornin'. Glad to hear it. Deap loaded, I see." He was still smiling.

"Loaded to her scuppers till we pumped some of the pickle out of her." Richard had been trying to smile with Saul, but at this point he gave it up. "There must be some price for them—such fine, fat fish—a fair price for 'em, Captain Saul."

"A *fair* price? What you talkin' about, Richie?"

Richard pointed to the two anchored vessels in the stream.

"We'd've beat them home only for turning out for that wreck, but of course——"

"You'd a beat 'em home?" Saul's smile broadened. "Them two out there?" He chuckled. He roared. "Them two got no herrin', Richie. The ice in the Gulf druv 'em out the Bay of Islands, an' they put into Sydney and loaded coal. The hull Bay of Islands fleet put into Sydney to load with coal. They're draggin' along the road somewheres right now. Fair price for them herrin', did you say? There'll be the best price paid for years for 'em."

Richard was still staring dumbly at Saul when he felt a nudge at his elbow. It was Archie Gillis. "Three weeks from home—don't let Captain Saul get away," whispered Archie. "Pass him the word, will yuh, to slip Sam an' me a ten spot on account? Three weeks gone, plenty wet outside, but all dry inside. Three weeks gone an' a cellar load o' dark Bavarian beer waitin' for us. Pass him the word will yuh, skipper?"

# XXVI

## PETER STOPS ASHORE

THE Pentle place had been closed up and the servants were gone; but Mrs. Pentle's car was still waiting at the gate, and Mrs. Pentle herself—old John Ferguson, on his way to the lookout, could see Mrs. Pentle perched up on her flat rock and looking out on Gloucester harbor and the sea.

There was a fishing-schooner sailing out. John put his glasses on her and was entering her in his book when he heard some one's step on the ladder leading to his tower, and then the hatch sliding back. It was Mrs. Pentle.

"I've heard of your book, John. May I look at it?"

"Surely, ma'am, surely." He passed it to her. "For seventeen years now I've been keeping it—the account o' the fishing-vessels sailin' out o' Gloucester, ma'am. A column for the day o' departure, one for the name o' the vessel, one for the master, and one for the day she comes back home."

She was turning the pages.

"So many never come back home, do they?"

"Nacherally—they bein' fishermen, ma'am."

"Ah-h, here's the year!" She ran her finger down the page. "And here!" and read: "'*Valorous*—sailed December seventeenth—and never returned.'"

"I mind her, ma'am, with the proud name—Georges handlinin'."

"I know. My father was one of her crew. . . . But here"—she stopped in her turning of the pages—"isn't this the entry of one they've just given up for lost?"

"That's her, ma'am—the *Conqueror*. It's queer what bad luck goes with those proud names, ma'am. Peter Crudden was master of her."

"Peter Crudden! I played with Peter Crudden when we were children together. And he's lost?"

"When they print the names o' the crew in the Gloucester papers, it's a hundred to one they're gone, ma'am. A married sister o' Peter's is a neighbor o' my married daughter's up in Boston, and they're cryin' their heart out a'ready, she writes me—Peter's sister an' her children."

Mrs. Pentle closed the book.

"We live such sheltered lives here ashore, most of us, don't we, John? And we complain at the smallest little discomfort—many of us, I mean. And those brave men sail out to the dangerous waters in their little boats, where the best of it is hardship and death comes so often. It must be born in me—I just can't help feeling different toward those fishermen from what I do toward the men I meet in my business in the city."

She left; and, watching her swing down the ladder, John Ferguson was thinking that for a woman of her build—full-bosomed and no slimling—she was cert'nly light on her feet, and wondering why a young and good-looking widow as she was—dang good-looking—why more o' those wealthy young men she must know hadn't hooked her afore that. "Must be," mused John, "none of 'em's used the right bait."

John turned, just naturally to have another look out to sea, and—"Well, you old gadabout! Talkin' away to yourself an' a vessel comin' in," muttered John and hurried to point his glasses at what he saw wabbling in.

"Dang me if she c'n be!" cried John. "Dang me, but she is!"

It was the *Conqueror*—her foremast gone half-way to the deck, her mainmast gone clean to the deck, and her bowsprit broken off at the knight-heads. And she was a foot thick, or more, in ice; and in her jury-rigging was her flag—at half-mast.

"That's one, ye ravenous sea, dang ye, ye didn't get!" muttered John. "And she'll have a tale to tell!" And wondering how many of 'em were gone, and who they were, he entered the month and day of her return.

The *Conqueror* had fitted out at Duncan's; and Duncan's wharf and store had not changed in twenty years. Mr. Duncan did not like changes.

The old shelves of canned goods in Duncan's, the long packages of blue-papered macaroni, the little green cartons of fish-hooks, the piled-up barrels of flour and boxes of hardtack—they were all of the same old reliable brands. And the woolen mitts in strings! And in back was an area of kegs of red lead and hanks of tarred ground-line and coils of stout rope, and oilskins and sou'-westers, and rubber boots and the heavy leather red jackboots—the smell of them was all over Duncan's.

Fred Lichens, who had kept books for thirty years for Mr. Duncan, was looking down the wharf at the *Conqueror* warping into the slip when Mrs. Pentle arrived in her car. Her arrival was not surprising. She had half a dozen small charities in Gloucester, and she came regularly to Mr. Duncan's for advice about them.

Fred knew all this exactly, because he kept the books for the Gloucester end of these things—drawing a few extra dollars a month therefor—and he had known Mrs. Pentle since she was a little girl and used to come with her mother, and without her as she grew older, to Mr. Duncan's to draw, against whatever would be her father's share, the stores which the family needed to keep them alive while the father was out to sea.

Fred remembered when the girl who was now Mrs. Pentle left high school to go to work in Boston. She was a bouncingly pretty girl, and within two years married Pentle, the millionaire department-store man.

Fred dusted a chair for Mrs. Pentle and set it in her favorite spot, which was beside a window in Mr. Duncan's own office looking out on the harbor. Sitting there, she saw an iced-up wreck of a vessel and some of her crew leaping up onto the wharf, where a crowd was surrounding them. She asked what vessel it was, and Fred told her—the *Conqueror,* Peter Crudden; and she said No! and Fred said Yes, ma'am, it was.

"I wonder if I should know him now," she said; and then: "Which is Peter Crudden?"

"Captain Crudden," said Fred, "is the one Mr. Duncan is bending toward to hear better."

The crowd was moving up toward the store. Mrs. Pentle jumped up on her chair so as to be able to look over the glazed lights of glass between the private office and the store as they came in.

Peter Crudden was a hard-looking figure of a man, coming into Duncan's store that day. He had not shaved for days, and his thick hair hadn't been combed or brushed for a month. He had not slept in a week; and when he took his seat on the long store bench and let his head settle wearily back against the wall he looked old.

He was telling about the big gale coming on and how her spars went, which maybe saved her from going into the shoals and being lost right there, and how they worked her way clear o' the shoals under jury-rig, how they were lookin' for a little ease and comfort, when aboard comes this unlucky sea, with no more warning than a shooting star out of the sky, and sweeps—cleaner than ever you could sweep the floor o' the store—her deck and all, everything. And atop o' that a sea to fill her cabin full. Four of 'em makin' for the deck were thrown back into the cabin again—smashed afoul o' the stove one, and atop o' the lockers and into a loo'ard bunk another; and how they picked themselves up and made the deck, and when they got there—as if a clean-swept deck warn't hard luck enough—there was Eben Tarr that was to the wheel, his breast smashed again' the wheel spokes and he dead.

"And the two on the deck gone—gone, sir, so quick that we never even got a sight o' them or a smothered hail from them goin'," concluded Peter. "An' cold! And ice! And——" But once more he let his head fall back against the wall.

Fred was so wrapped up in Peter's story that he forgot Mrs. Pentle till he found her beside him and heard her saying in a low voice:

"When I was a little girl I listened to fishermen on that same bench, with their stories of toil and death. And I remember how I would linger, making believe to retie my packages into a tighter bundle, to hear more of what they had to say. It was a man sitting on that bench, Mr. Lichens, in just that way, not knowing who I was, who brought word of my father's vessel gone down—and all hands with her."

"I cal'late the hard tales told from that same bench would fill more books than was ever writ about Gloucester, an' there's been a many—an' some foolish ones among 'em," said Fred.

"Those two men washed overboard"—Peter was speaking again—"someone has got to tell their people how they come to be lost. And poor Eben in the ice-house aboard the vessel—someone has got to 'tend to him."

"I'll 'tend to Eben," said Mr. Duncan.

"That'll help," said Peter. "And now—I'm through with fishin'—through with goin' to sea! I'm goin' to stop ashore!"

It was then Mrs. Pentle ran from beside Fred and into the store. "Captain Crudden——"

"This is Mrs. Pentle, captain," said Mr. Duncan.

"Celia Curtin that was," explained Mrs. Pentle. "I knew you as a boy."

"I know," said Peter. And then he almost smiled: "And no girl in Gloucester ever better able to take care of herself!"

"I heard you say, captain, that you were through with the sea. If I could get you something to do in my store, would you take it, captain? If it was fit work, I mean, for a man?"

"It won't have to be fit—I'll trim bonnets for ladies before I go back to fishin'," said Peter, "and thank you for the chance."

Peter passed out with his crew.

Mrs. Pentle turned to Mr. Duncan.

"So that's settled! I shall telephone you, Mr. Duncan, about Captain Crudden's place in my store—the work will not be disagreeable."

Mr. Duncan and Fred watched Mrs. Pentle's car racing up the street; and then Fred said:

"Mr. Duncan, Peter didn't look like any magazine cover of a hero I've seen lately, but—sitting there on that bench awhile ago—did you take a look at Mrs. Pentle's face while he was telling the story of that wreck?"

Mr. Duncan looked at his old bookkeeper.

"Reef down your imagination, Fred. She's a woman who likes to manage things and to do good; but what I'm afraid she'll do now will be to ruin the makings of a smart young skipper with her soft job ashore."

Mr. Henston, the manager of Pentle's, brought Peter Crudden to Flaxley, the head shipper.

"Flaxley, you are to break in this man," said Henston, "and he's to go on the pay-roll at thirty dollars per week."

Flaxley wondered why a new man, who was to be only a shipper's helper, should go on the pay-roll for thirty dollars a week; and he wondered yet more why Henston should be telling him about the pay-roll, which was made up in the office and not in the shipping-room. He wondered, too, why the manager himself should take the trouble to introduce the new man.

"You needn't make it easy for him on my account," whispered Henston, going out.

Flaxley had seen a lot of things happen in Pentle's, where he had been so long that, when Mrs. Pentle wanted to know about anything that went back beyond the memory of even the ancient cashier Herrick, she would send down for Flaxley.

He was no older than Herrick, but he had started to work in the store younger.

Flaxley was like something that went with the store. He had privileges; and he did not like Henston and would not have minded telling him so, but that he had great respect for Mrs. Pentle and, he thought, what many more in the store thought, that Henston was dressing his windows so as to catch Mrs. Pentle's eye, and some day—you can't tell about women, especially young widows—some day Henston might marry her.

Flaxley looked Peter over and rather liked his make-up, and pointed out a big dry-goods case and told him what he wanted done. Flaxley saw the new man hook into the box, which weighed eight hundred pounds, up-end it, claw-hammer it, and toss the heavy bolts of cloth out onto the long table.

"Jeepers!" said Flaxley. "He did that while some o' the other young fellows here would be peeking around for help!" He studied Peter for two days more, and from then on wearied the head shippers of other emporiums, whenever he met one, with his tales of the strength and niftiness of the new man he'd "picked up."

Peter took his lunch in the basement where he worked, the same being put up by his married sister in a package made to look like a camera-box.

He had bought this lunch-box in Pentle's—he remembered it was sold to him by a pretty girl with a pleasant manner. It was just the thing for lunch—she had said—all the girls in Pentle's carried 'em; and there was ten per cent off for employees. It was the first time in his life that Peter ever got anything off on anything he'd ever bought, and he said so; and the salesgirl looked at him again and then smiled.

"You're not a city man?" she said. Peter said he wasn't; and then his change came and he went off.

It was his third day in Pentle's. He sat on a stool by the door leading into a passageway, to eat his lunch. Just across the passageway was the door into the girls' rest-room, where there were lounges and chairs and a big heater on which they set their cans of coffee to warm up.

"My new helper, girls—height five feet eleven, weight a hundred ninety, thirty-two teeth in his head and not married—look him over," said old Flaxley, making Peter blush. "And now warm his coffee for him—he's been too shy to ask," and Flaxley handed Peter's coffee across the passageway.

They looked him over, some of them saucily. And hearing Flaxley call him Peter, in a week or so some of them were calling him Peter and offering him pickles and doughnuts from their lunch-boxes; and there were always three or four ready to take his coffee from him when he reached it across the passageway to be heated.

One day a group of them, with their heads bunched in the doorway as usual, chaffed him across the passageway. Peter was looking at a lovely white neck and dark little head, back of the row of heads in the door, and wondering where he had seen that girl before. And biting into a thick corned-beef sandwich, he remembered where—it was the girl who had sold him the lunch-box.

"Ten per cent off for employees," shouted Peter; "all the girls carry 'em!" and held up the lunch-box. The others caught the idea and laughed uproariously—except the one who had sold it. She blushed scarlet and disappeared, and did not come back.

"She must 'a' thought I was tryin' to get acquainted," said Peter later to old Flaxley, "and didn't like it."

That same afternoon Mrs. Pentle looked into the shipping-room. It was one of those warm days in winter and, of course, the steam was on. Peter was wearing only a sleeveless white jersey above his belt. Peter was wide-shouldered and trim-waisted, with the easy lines of the man who is quick as well as powerful in action.

Flaxley saw Mrs. Pentle in the doorway. Henston was with her and, because Henston was with her, Flaxley stepped quickly over to the door. If Mr. Henston had anything to say about Peter he wanted to be there to hear it.

Mrs. Pentle was watching Peter at work.

"He doesn't look like the same man I saw in Gloucester," said Mrs. Pentle. "His jaws were set like steel that day, his eyes like hard lights back in his head, and his voice was hoarse. And his skin was like something worn raw by the beating of hammers on it. He looked like a middle-aged man then, and now—why, he doesn't look twenty-two now!"

"He ain't much more," said Flaxley.

Just then Peter up-ended a big dry-goods case, ripped off a boarded side, tore away a layer of thick paper, and tossed onto a table ten feet away a bolt of cloth that Mrs. Pentle knew weighed fifty pounds; and he did not even bend his knees to do it.

"A powerful brute," said Henston.

"Brute?" said Mrs. Pentle.

"I mean—" said Henston; but Mrs. Pentle had stepped inside the shipping-room door.

Peter was whistling; but he had to up-end another case. It took a little effort, this one, and he stopped his whistling.

"Up—up—upsie boy!" cooed Peter. It did not up. He set himself and tugged. He grew impatient. "Come here, you loafer!" he shouted, and braced and heaved. The case came up.

"When Peter takes to heavin' in earnest they generally come," said Flaxley.

While old Flaxley stood there looking from Peter to Mrs. Pentle he couldn't help thinking—much as he respected her—he couldn't help wondering if she was comparing Peter to Pentle that was dead and gone.

"If she is," thought Flaxley, "Lord help the memory o' Pentle—who was never any Apoller for build and about as much blood in him as a man'd find in four pounds of excelsior packin'."

Peter was whistling again and carolling and heaving facetious comment at anybody and everybody, when he felt the silence. He looked round and saw Mrs. Pentle.

"How do you do, captain?"

Peter shifted his cotton-hook from right hand to left and shook her extended hand.

"I'm cert'nly glad to see you again, Mrs. Pentle."

"How are you getting on, captain?"

"Fine—fine!"

"The work is not too hard?"

"Hard?" Peter smiled. "Often enough I think of those fellows out on the Banks turning out on a good, cold, blizzardy day in winter, Mrs. Pentle—turning out at four o'clock in the mornin' and goin' into a cold hold with the ice and baitin' up, so's to be ready to go over the side in the dory by the first o' the daylight. And then all day long it's heave and haul trawls, with maybe a sea that they don't know what minute'll get 'em. An' dressin' down a deck-load o' fish on top o' that afore they turn in of a night—an' maybe standin' watch in the night again, standin' to the wheel beatin' home in a nor'wester, when it's so cold you have to wear a woolen mask over your face with two holes to see through and another to breathe through, and your watch-mates have to relieve you—and you them—every six or eight minutes to keep from freezin' to death!

"Hard work, Mrs. Pentle!" It was too ridiculous—Peter laughed aloud this time.

"I live with my married sister, Mrs. Pentle, and goin' home these cold winter nights I sit down to supper, and after supper I slip into my slipshods, an' I get out my pipe, an' I spread my feet out before a nice, hot fire, in a rockin'-chair, an' the sister's six children they climb up all over me and we have one good time together. Some nights I take one or two of the oldest of 'em to the movies."

"You like children, then, captain?"

"The man, Mrs. Pentle, that ain't got children is bein' cheated out o' something," said Peter. "An' sittin' there after the children are put to bed, I say to myself: 'Well, Peter Crudden, you're cert'nly one lucky dog. Here's you into your warm, dry bed every night, an' work that there's about enough of to exercise you, an' no matter how the weather is—no matter about sea and wind so rough you can't fish—there's your pay-envelope every week with the same old reg'lar amount in it.'"

"I'm glad you like it here, captain, and—I'm partners with Mr. Duncan in a new vessel to be named after me."

"I hope," said Peter, earnestly, "that she won't shame her name—that she'll be fast an' weatherly—and always find her way back home."

"I hope so, captain. And now—if there is anything about your work you do not like, let me know." There was a tramping of girls hurrying through the passageway. Two or three were gazing curiously in from the doorway.

"Closing-up time, is it?" Mrs. Pentle had suddenly become nervous. "Good-by." She passed out with Henston.

Old Flaxley looked kindly at Peter. "No airs to her, Peter; all men look alike to her," said old Flaxley.

"She's all right," said Peter. "But as for hard work—Lord!"

And he was chuckling over that all the while he was washing up and still smiling at the thought of it when he overhauled a girl in the passageway on his way out. He said good evening politely and was hurrying by when the figure said: "Good evening, captain."

It was something in the voice that held him. He had another look—it wasn't very light in the passageway. Well, if it wasn't the girl who had sold him the lunch-box!

Peter walked to the corner with her; when her car came along, it happened to be his car. She lived not very far from Peter's sister. He walked to her door with her. Her name was Sarah Hern.

After work next day Peter waited at the door of the shipping-room. When she came out of the girls' room he fell into step with her and they rode home together. Sarah invited him in. Peter stepped in for a minute and met Sarah's mother.

He stayed to supper. There must have been eight or nine Hern boys and girls, some grown up, with a widowed mother. And they all but the mother sat down together; and the girls kept bouncing up and down, hopping back and forth between table and kitchen to help out their mother when things didn't come fast enough.

Peter felt as if he had known them for years; and after supper an older brother passed Peter a cigar and up-stairs in the living-room talked in a casually friendly way on baseball, prize-fighting, the big war, the latest movies. One of Sarah's sisters played the piano and Sarah and another sister sang. Other young men called. Peter was a good listener until a little brother of Sarah's peeked in and finally came over by Peter and shyly said:

"Won't you tell something, captain, about the big ocean?"

Peter told them a little about the big ocean, as he knew it, and stopped. He himself wanted to hear more songs—"Annie Laurie," or "The *Robert E. Lee,*" or something like them—but they asked him to keep on. He told more—he would have told them more in the first place, but he had no idea shore-going people, especially girls, cared much for rough fishing life. In a little while he was warmed up and going good. When he stopped this time they were all bent over and staring at him. The big brother straightened up first and pulled out his watch and said:

"What d'ye know—I'm chairman o' the house committee down to the club, and we had a meeting scheduled for an hour and a half ago!"

Sarah sang "Asthore" and "Mother Machree" and there was more playing. And they all had ice-cream and cake, and the older brother gave Peter a great grip of the hand going; and they all asked him to call again soon and waved him good night from the doorway. And Peter, walking up the street, began to think that maybe he had been sticking 'round his sister's too much nights.

Mrs. Pentle called into the shipping-room on a tour of inspection the next day again and regularly after that; and regularly Peter rode home with Sarah and one night he asked her if she would go to the theater with him. She looked so pleased that he was sorry he hadn't got his courage up sooner.

It was to a musical show that Peter took Sarah. All the time he was there he felt uncomfortable—some of the people on the stage cert'nly did carry some things pretty far.

However, it was over, and Peter suggested supper at a restaurant.

Peter knew nothing of the night restaurants of the city. He picked out one he saw advertised in the theater program and because it also happened to be on the way to their trolley-line. He felt Sarah shrink a little going in; and after he was inside and seated he wished he had paid more attention to her shrinking. But he had been too excited to notice. He had been lashed to the wheel of his vessel steering her in a living gale and not half so much excited as he was now. It wasn't just the kind of place, maybe, to bring a young girl; but they were in there now and he guessed they would weather whatever happened. He asked Sarah if she would have a glass of beer or anything like that. He didn't want her to think him too slow. He was pleased when she said no.

What would she have to eat? Sarah picked up the card. "Suppose we try a tarble dote?" she said.

"All right. Where is it?"

Sarah pointed it out:

TABLE D'HOTE $1.50

Peter had a notion she was trying to save his money, and he liked her for it, but he wasn't looking to save money. He pointed out various things on the other side of the bill, picking out always the high-priced ones, but Sarah shook her head. She always preferred the "tarble dote" to ordering à la carte.

The waiter approached.

"What to drink?" he asked briskly.

"Nothing to drink," answered Peter, and, pointing out the caption, Table D'Hôte $1.50, said "Two."

"Two what?" asked the waiter.

"Why, two of what it says—two tarble dotes."

"And what drinks did you say?" The waiter bent a confidential ear and scratched his head with his pencil while he waited. Peter looked up at the ear, then he stretched up and whispered into it:

"Ever hear of the *Boundin' Biller,* Captain Hanks?"

"The *Boundin' Biller?*" Well, all kinds of queer ones blow into restaurants—the waiter slewed his head 'round, looked at Peter, put his ear down, and whispered back: "What about it?"

And Peter whispered up into the waiting ear:

"The *Boundin' Biller,* Captain Hanks,
She was hove flat down on th' Western Banks."

"Huh!" The waiter slewed his head round again to have another look, which pulled his ear out of position and forced Peter to raise his voice.

"He had the greatest ear, that Captain Hanks," explained Peter. "He could hear a sound when no other mortal ever sailed a vessel could. He heard a steamer's whistle in a gale o' wind and fog one time, and—runnin' fair before the wind at the time he was—he jibed her over, and o' course you know what happens to a vessel that's runnin' with her main sheet to the knot an' somebody jibes her over all standin'?"

The waiter stared with increasing doubt at Peter.

"Captain Hanks had nothing on you for hearing," explained Peter. "I said no drinks."

"Oh, oh, excuse me! I begin to get yuh now. No drinks," and the waiter retreated and returned in silence, but with the food.

Two women on a platform, one very stout and one very thin, danced and sang; and then they half-wiggled and half-danced in and out among the tables. Here and there they chucked a chin or kissed a bald head, and one, on invitation, sat on a man's knee and had a sip of wine with him.

Sarah herself was knots prettier than either of the singing girls—Peter could see that—and she was dressed pretty, too. He didn't know what kind of stuff it was she was wearing, except that it was a kind of slaty sea-gray color and fitted snug. And she had a hat that was shaped like a little capsized dory and listed to starboard, just about the same list a vessel takes when she puts her scuppers under to a light breeze.

Peter, by and by, began to have a notion that Sarah wasn't enjoying herself. There was a party in one of the booths—Peter could not see them without turning, but he had a feeling in the back of his head that they were paying more attention to Sarah than she liked. But perhaps he was wrong about it. What with the lights and the music and the dancing, he was beginning to feel like rolling out a little song himself—a little more maybe about the *Boundin' Biller*—but Sarah suddenly started to draw on her gloves. And she looked tired; and Peter hurried to pay the bill and tip the waiter—fifty cents. The waiter thanked him with more respect than Peter would have thought was in him.

Peter was jumping up to put Sarah's coat on her before his waiter could do it, when a strange waiter came over with a glass of champagne and set it on the table before Sarah.

"The gentleman wishes to know if the young lady will have a glass of wine with him."

Some joker, of course. Peter smiled till he saw that Sarah was looking frightened.

"Who sent it?" asked Peter.

The waiter looked over to the booth which Peter had had in mind earlier. Peter looked over that way. A head darted out and back into the corner of the booth. Peter's eyebrows lowered and his eyes narrowed. It looked like a familiar sail.

"Did he say anything about a drink for me?" asked Peter.

The waiter started to smile and then said "No, sir," very quickly.

Peter picked up the glass delicately.

"Do you want to drink this wine, Sarah?"

"Oh, Peter!"

"It's all right—I knew you didn't," assured Peter.

He stepped over to the booth. He was right about the man in the corner—it was Henston.

More than the shipping of goods was discussed in the shipping-room, and there was more than that glass of wine in Peter's mind when he looked in on Henston in the booth. There was a salesgirl who had lost her job in Pentle's. It was Henston who had taken advantage of his position to start her on the wrong road.

"The young lady," said Peter to Henston, "don't want to drink your health."

"Too bad—she drank it before," said Henston.

Peter had hard work to keep the wine from spilling.

"If you don't believe me, ask her," said Henston.

"What's that?" Peter said that to gain time to get his balance.

"I said, Ask her."

"You—you squid, you!"

Peter whipped the glass of wine into Henston's face and with that reached across for him. The two men nearest to Peter in the booth stood up to stop him. Peter reached a hand to the collar of each, stepped back, and brought their faces crashing together.

"It's my fight and his—keep out, you!" said Peter, and swept them back and down into their seats.

A waiter attacked Peter from behind. It took Peter a few seconds to wriggle 'round, get the heel of his hand under the waiter's chin, and jolt him down to where, falling backward on his heels all the while, he brought up solidly between the plump shoulders of the fat one of the singing ladies who was fervidly warbling:

"Mem-moh-reez—mem-moh-reez!"

to an elderly male with a proud smile on his face.

A little cloud of powder flew into the air above the singer; an ejaculation of shocked surprise from her lips. Peter felt sorry, but didn't see how he could help her just then.

It was Henston Peter wanted, and all the waiters tugging from behind warn't going to stop him. He reached across the table and took a good hold and hauled. It was like hauling a two-hundred-pound halibut over the gunnel of a dory, only he had nothing against any halibut that ever he hauled into a dory. He braced and heaved, and Henston came out of his corner and over the table, and kept on coming till he was clear over the table behind Peter and flat into the aisle beyond.

"You'll have to excuse me," said Peter to the diners at that table—all men; but they spoke right up, three of them, to say hurriedly:

"It's all right; it's all right." And the other, as if to himself: "And they're scourin' the country for White Hopes!"

"Stop him, some of you, before he smashes the place up!" roared a frantic man who came running up then; and two, four, six waiters piled onto Peter, who, having no quarrel with them, gently shoved them off and went over to get Sarah.

A pugnacious-looking, prematurely gray-haired man stood at the café door as they were passing out. Peter was wondering if he would have to fight him, too.

The man's face—it was the café bouncer—broke into a sudden grin.

"You're all right," he said. "I been watchin' that fuhler an' his crowd. An' you leave it to the manager to stick the damages onto him. You're all right, and that young lady—you take it from me, young fuhler—she's all right, too."

Sarah felt grateful to the bouncer for that tribute. She hoped that it would bring a smile to Peter's face. But all the way home in the trolley there was no smile from Peter; he clung grimly to his strap and stared straight at the advertising cards. At her door he only spoke to say "Good night."

"Good night, Peter." And then, with a little clutch at his sleeve: "You're not mad with me, Peter?"

"I'm mad with myself for makin' the show o' you that I did to-night; but when he said you'd drunk wine with him there—said it with a bunch o' people like himself listenin'—when he said that——"

Sarah's curling little hand had been reaching out for his. It came back flat to her side again.

"I got a bad temper, Sarah. It don't come out often, but it's there. And to-night, Sarah, when he lied about you like that, and his crowd, and maybe others round, believin' him maybe——"

Sarah shivered. She knew now that in Peter's good opinion of her lay most of what she cared for in this world. In the good opinion of some man or other lay most of what the other girls in the store cared for. Always with them was the undying note—to hold and keep men's good opinion, to keep it at no matter what sacrifice of everything else.

"What they don't know will never hurt them. A man is no better off because he knows things!" She had heard that so often; and no girl is spending eight hours a day for two years with other girls without soaking in something of what they believe—not and be human, that is.

But she had never met a man like Peter. He held her in such respect, he held all girls in such respect, that it was solemn. Only the night before she had thought one time he was going to kiss her, and she had surged toward him, with her lips soft for him, but he had only said "Good night" suddenly and had run off—almost—up the street.

But Peter was speaking.

"Men have to go out to fight for a living in places where the fighting, Sarah, is sometimes pretty fierce. And sometimes that kind o' fighting makes 'em rough, and maybe cruel in spots. But that don't mean they're bad men. Men c'n be rough sometimes, but I never knew a man—that was any good, Sarah—that wanted women to have any o' men's badness. Aboard a vessel we just nacherally expect every man in her will 'tend to his part o' the work, even if he loses his life sometimes 'tendin' to it. That's a man's part, an' it's what he owes to the other men aboard. An' every man has that, an' it's as much a part of him as the beard on his face. And so when there's a woman somewhere a man's countin' on, he expects just nacherally she'll hold out against all the world for him. That's her part. And when to-night, Sarah, that fat-faced, lyin' brute said you'd drunk wine with him, 'twas just as much as if you'd said you liked him once—liked his kind."

Sarah sat down on the step. Pretty soon—she couldn't help it—Peter heard her sobbing.

He lifted her up.

"Sarah, Sarah; what is it?"

She drew away from him; for, of course, when she told him, he that was so good himself, would never care for her again.

"It was true what he said, Peter! I did drink wine with him, and in that same place!"

Peter stood very still. And then he moved out to the curbstone, and with little tugs at his collar kept looking up at the sky. By and by he came back to the doorway.

"I wish you hadn't, Sarah; I wish you hadn't," he said, but came no nearer.

"Wish I hadn't told you?"

"No, no; I'm glad you told me. And I know what it meant for you to tell me. I'd rather take a chance going over the side—redjacks, oilskins, and all—in a high sea after a shipmate than have to tell a girl something about myself that I know she don't want to hear. 'Specially when I care for her—not that I'm thinkin' you care for me so much, Sarah."

The blood came back to Sarah's heart. She hurried to tell him the rest.

"I've been wanting to tell you, Peter; you mustn't think me worse than I am. He used to come down to my counter and talk to me; and after a few days of that he asked me to go out with him. I was a little proud at first—to be noticed by the manager above the other girls. Girls like to be made much of, Peter; if it's only by a lost dog that licks their hand, they like it. I went to that place with him, after he'd asked me a dozen times, and the third time there with him I drank a glass of champagne. I wanted to know for myself what it tasted like. But I never took it with him again—nor went out with him again, because coming home in the taxi that night he tried to get fresh. A lot of men, Peter, think that if a girl isn't cold and stiff in her ways they can get fresh with them. And I kicked the door of the taxi open and left him and came home alone."

"I'm glad you told me that. And, Sarah?"

"Yes, Peter?"

"Good night, Sarah."

"You're not mad with me any more, Peter?"

"I could never stay mad with you."

"Then you must tell me you're not, Peter. A girl wants to be told these things."

Her eyes were smiling up like stars through the dark of the doorway at him. He drew back her head to him and kissed her. She lay very still against him. He patted her head.

"You'll marry me, won't you, Sarah, some day?"

"I'll ask mother. And whenever she says—will that do, Peter?"

Late every winter Mrs. Pentle took a month's trip South. She had returned from that trip South and was making the rounds of the store. She came to the shipping-room, looked 'round, asked Flaxley a few questions about things; and then, as she was about to go:

"I don't see Captain Crudden. He is not sick?"

"Peter's gone, ma'am," said Flaxley. "Mr. Henston and Peter had words, ma'am, and Peter put on his coat and walked out."

"What!"

"Yes'm. But before he put on his coat he threw Mr. Henston into the passageway. Then he went and got married," he added.

"Peter married!"

"Yes, ma'am. He surprised us, too—that is, gettin' married so quick."

"Whom did he marry?"

"Miss Hern, from the notions counter."

"Hern? Notions? Oh—I remember her now."

Flaxley saw her cross the passageway to the rest-room and sit down on a couch. After a time she went up-stairs.

It was after two o'clock—Flaxley remembered the time very well—when Mrs. Pentle left the rest-room; so she must have ordered her car and gone to Gloucester right away, for she was in Duncan's store, according to the minutes of Fred Lichens, the old bookkeeper, before four o'clock.

"Is Captain Crudden here?" was her first question.

"He is. He's down the wharf—ready to sail in your vessel," said Mr. Duncan. "Shall I call him up?"

"Please do."

Mr. Duncan hailed from the steps of the store, and Peter came; but no smiling shipper's helper who looked like a boy was this Peter.

He was smiling enough, but there was already the hint in the set jaws, the wary, far-looking eyes of the master mariner, the ocean battler. Her confidence ebbed; she was now in an atmosphere of real men's work and almost timidly she heard herself asking:

"Will you tell me, Captain Crudden, what was wrong with the work in the store? I thought you liked it."

"Nothing wrong, Mrs. Pentle."

"Then what, please?"

"M-m-m." Peter revolved his cloth cap on one finger but said nothing.

"One day in the shipping-room, Captain Crudden, you told me what a comfort it was for a man to be home—of the joy of the easy slippers and the warm fire, of children climbing all over you—of the warm bed every night."

"That's right; I did."

"No more danger, no more hardship, your sure pay every week!"

"I know; I know."

"Then why? Was it the work?"

"The work?" Peter clearly smiled now. "Haddockin' in South Channel, Mrs. Pentle, workin' fourteen tubs—eight thousand hooks to a dory a day, an' dressin' our deckload o' fish on top o' that—three, four, yes an' five days an' nights runnin' sometimes, with no lookin' at our bunks till we filled her up——! Work? I cal'late I've done more work in South Channel fishin' many a day than in any ten days I ever saw in your store, Mrs. Pentle."

"Then why, please, Captain Crudden, why?"

"Why? When you went South, Mrs. Pentle, you left a man in your place to give orders."

"Mr. Henston? What of him?"

"Him!" Peter looked down at his cap, twirled it on a finger, looked at Mrs. Pentle, and then: "Him! Honest, Mrs. Pentle, if we had him out on the fishin'-grounds we wouldn't cut him up for bait!"

Peter went back to his vessel and Mrs. Pentle to her car.

"I ordered my house opened to-day. I'll run over there," she told Mr. Duncan.

It was a clear day with a fresh breeze from the west. She must have seen, when she looked, the whitecaps in the harbor as her car rolled over the road.

John Ferguson, up in his lookout, saw her car roll up to her gate. John could also see the reflection of the fresh fire in the grate in her den, the fresh pot of tea beside the window-seat. And no doubt she could see, as she sipped her tea, John Ferguson through an air-port of his aerie.

However, the *Celia Pentle* was sailing out to sea and John was entering her—*Celia Pentle,* Peter Crudden, Master, with the date, in his book—and was reading the entry over to himself when Mrs. Pentle came in.

The harbor had grown whiter under the little crests of the tossing seas, and outside the point they were rolling yet higher and higher.

"Isn't it rough weather to be sailing, John?" she asked.

"Rough? For an able fisherman and an able master and crew? No, Mrs. Pentle. The wind's fair, ma'am, as a man'd want for a run offshore—a great chance for Peter to try the new vessel out. This time to-morrow, ma'am, and if you could listen to Peter I'll bet you'd be proud to have such a wonderful vessel named after you. A new, able vessel and a new, lovely young wife—he oughter be the happy man sailin' to sea this night."

"But his wife—won't she be lonesome, John?"

"For her own good and Peter's, I cert'nly hope so, ma'am. But she won't be lonesome for too long, ma'am. Their age—an' healthy an' lovin'—they're the kind, ma'am, to have a houseful o' children. An' that'll be a good thing. Many's the day an' night, out on the wide ocean there, Peter'll be drivin' his vessel, thinkin' o' them children an' the mother to home, an' plannin' how he's ever goin' to kill fish enough to pay for the shoes an' their clothes an' their schoolin' an' the house rent, an' all the rest of it. Many a hard night out to sea he'll be thinkin' o' that, an' it'll be that'll hold him to his work an' make a full man o' him. And the mother she'll be keepin' the home, lovin' the children an' lovin' Peter that's workin' night an' day to keep 'em. I tell you, ma'am, they're the wise ones that lay their courses so that by 'n' by, whether they will or no, they got to go on with the steady drivin'."

"Look at her now, ma'am, down to the rail already an' whalin' away through it! An' there's Peter—look at him—in the oilskins up by the wind'ard bitt! An'—— But there's someone callin' you, ma'am."

It was her maid, who came running over to say that there was an urgent telephone message.

"It is from Mr. Henston, madam."

Mrs. Pentle nodded that she heard, but continued to look through the glasses at the *Celia* sailing out to sea.

The maid coughed. She was at the foot of the tower, looking up.

"He says, madam, that the silk-buyer wishes him to go to New York for that stock of pongees, and that he is waiting for an answer to his letter before he goes."

Mrs. Pentle stood at the hatch of the tower, looking down.

"Fishermen are pretty careful of what they use for bait, aren't they, John?"

John, after consideration, said:

"Bank fishermen are maybe more careful than most, ma'am; though, when we was hard put to it, I've seen some pretty poor quality o' stuff cut up for bait."

Mrs. Pentle looked down the ladder to the maid.

"Tell Mr. Henston there is no answer. Tell him to go to New York and that, hereafter, he had better stay there and look after the silks exclusively."

For as long as the falling darkness would allow, John saw Mrs. Pentle picking out the plunging course of Peter's vessel through the green-white waters. And then, turning to him, she said:

"You know, or do you, John, that Peter's wife worked in my store?"

"O yes, ma'am."

"Of course. Well, I've been thinking that I ought to take some interest in my young girls when they marry. On the day the Cruddens have a baby born to them I shall make over the *Celia Pentle* to the baby."

For all she smiled—and in John's opinion she should 'a' been a happy woman to be able to say things like that—for all that there was what John called a melancholy in her voice and a sort of vapor in her eyes when she said it; and, looking after her, she making her lonesome way over to the big house with all the lighted windows, he couldn't help thinking that for all they said she was such a boss of a woman—for all that—there ought to be somebody more than a lot of butlers and maids and cooks to meet her at the door.

There is the story of Peter's stop ashore, as old man Flaxley, John Ferguson, and Fred Lichens know it, each telling the other two his share in it. In telling his part of it, Fred had to add that he couldn't see where Peter's stop ashore ever hurt him any.

"Some people thought a stop ashore would ruin Peter," said Fred, "but certainly, since the baby came, he has been making fishing history in the *Celia!*" He looked over to Mr. Duncan when he said that.

Mr. Duncan wasn't deaf.

"I never said a little stop ashore harmed anybody," retorted Mr. Duncan—"it's the stopping ashore too long!"

## XXVII

## NO NEWS VALUE

THE steam trawler *Pelican* was leaving the southwest banks of Georges Shoals with a trip of fish for the Boston market. She bounced around a bit coming off the bank, which isn't to say that it was rough weather—not what a bank fisherman would call rough. She was an early one of the first steam trawling fleet, one of the short-legged round-bellied models, and that model never did need much excuse to go bouncing around.

From the southwest bank the course is northeasterly until the north shoal is cleared. Then it is west northwest and let her go for Boston Lightship.

It was raining, a cold rain, leaving the bank. Clearing the north shoal the rain cooled to snow, which soon hardened to hail—hail that hit a man's face like bits of flint whenever he looked to windward; all of which was nothing unusual for that time of year, and so not to be complained of.

The wind hauled into the northwest, making as it hauled, until by and by it was blowing perhaps fifty miles an hour, which is wind enough when it's a cold winter day and coming fair out of the northwest. The good thing was that it brought clear weather—no thick o' fog or snow that doesn't let the watch see another vessel till she's on top of a man, nor the beacon lights of the shore till a vessel is into the surf or onto the rocks somewhere.

Steam trawlers carry a mate as well as a skipper; and on the *Pelican* the two always stood watch and watch for the passage home. Besides the skipper, or mate, on watch there was a man to the wheel in the pilot house; also a lookout man who might be in the bows of her peering out for ship or shore lights, or making himself useful around deck on a clear night like now.

The mate of the *Pelican* was Andie Wholley. He was from the old sailing fleet. Most of the skippers and mates of steam fishermen are old sailing-fleet men, but Andie dated further back than most of them. Forty winters he had trawled on Georges Shoals before shifting his bag to a fishing steamer; and forty winters on Georges, as any child on the streets in Gloucester can tell you, means that here is a tough old sea-gull; also is a lucky old sea bird to be still alive.

Andie was one of the kind that grow thinner and more wiry as they grow old. He might have weighed one hundred and fifty pounds in his lusty youth, no more. Men who only knew him as a steam fisherman would gaze upon his spare frame and wonder how he ever maneuvered to haul the heavy trawls of his old dory days. But he hauled them. At sixty-five years of age, he could still pick up an eighty-pound cod on his pitchfork and toss it into its proper pen as easily as—well, aboard the *Pelican* no one could see where the huskiest of them were doing it with any less fuss.

At ten o'clock in the night, the ship having cleared the north shoal, Andie took over the watch from the skipper. Steve Whitten was lookout man and in the wheel-house was Tom Boyle. The seas were running with the wind, which meant, the wind being in the northwest and the ship's course west northwest, that the seas were coming aboard by way of her starboard bow. Tom Boyle at the wheel was holding her to her course, instructions being to get her along home; which did not mean, however, that he wasn't to ease her into the worst of the high rolling ones when he saw them coming. He saw most of them coming in time, but sometimes one would get by him, and then the white water would come rolling aboard and fill half her waist and sometimes the whole after starboard gangway between the engine room house and the quarter rail. How she would roll down then! When he did ease her into it, the seas would come aboard too; but they would come straight over her bow, which allowed her to lift to them, and that meant not so much loose water on her deck.

Andie and Steve, being out on the open deck, could sometimes hear a sea coming when Tom in the closed wheel-house could not. One high, wide-shouldered fellow—they knew he was high and wide by the noise he made—the high boy came roaring along and they climbed into the after weather rigging; and from there almost comfortably looked down upon white water rolling across her waist and filling the length of her after gangway solid and so over her stern rail.

Tom Boyle, at the wheel, felt a bit worried about that one getting by him. Holding one hand on a wheel spoke, he reached out with the other, threw open an airport that looked out upon the deck from the after side of the wheel-house. He peered out anxiously, caught sight of the two figures outlined against the sky in the rigging. They were safe; but to relieve his feelings, he thrust a megaphone through the airport and yelled down the deck: "I missed that one, Andie! Thought the old girl was goin' to be hove down for a minute. 'Y' all right, Andie—you and Steve?"

"All right," shouted Andie. Against the gale of wind that was blowing, his voice did not carry beyond the end of his nose and he knew it, but it sort of nourished friendly feelings to be answering back.

The *Pelican* swung a boat from the davits on her starboard quarter. Andie brought his head down to Steve's and yelled in Steve's ear: "I'm afraid that quarter boat'll go adrift. Let's go and see."

They climbed down from the rigging, made their careful way along the deck. They had to be careful, the deck being all iced up, and the wind strong enough almost to pick them up and blow them overboard when they didn't have a good hold of something.

They reached the boat. "Thought so," yelled Andie to Steve. "Bow falls loose. Who d' y' s'pose hitched them so they wouldn't stay hitched? D' y' know what I think about most o' these steamer crews? They're the half of 'em shore bums. Can y' imagine an old trawler half hitchin' a boat's falls so they wouldn't stay half hitched? Not him. An' if he did the crew 'd take him some dark night an' heave him over the lee rail."

He caught up the loose bight of the falls, half hitched them anew. "So long's we're here," he shouted in Steve's ear, "I think I'll run a line over and under her, and lash her bow and stern so no sea'll carry her loose from the davits."

"Oughter have help for that, don't you think, Andie?" yelled Steve.

"Maybe we oughter," admitted Andie, "but everybody below is long ago turned in—let 'em stay there. Would you be thankin' anybody on watch for haulin' you out o' your warm bunk on a night like this? Course not. Nor me. We'll manage it. Get a couple o' long rope ends out o' the lazaretto, but give me a lift first."

Before Steve could give him the lift another sea came roaring down upon them. Both heard it coming and yelled to each other to watch out. Steve ran and slid along the icy gangway to the protection of the after end of the boiler-room house.

Andie was clinging to the gunnel of the boat with one hand, to the davit stanchion with the other, when the wall of water rolled down on him. The gunnel of the boat was icy, his fingers within his woolen mitt wouldn't take hold when he tried to grip the gunnel. He was standing on the ship's rail, which was icy. His feet slid from under him when he tried to grip the davit stanchion with both hands. The wall of water swept him overboard, past the steamer's quarter and under her counter, past her stern and into her roaring wake astern.

High rolling seas, a gale of wind, and a winter night offshore—Andie's first thought was: "You're gone at last, Andie Wholley!" though not forgetting at the same time to thrash out with his arms and legs to keep himself afloat. What good it would do him to keep afloat, where he would swim to if he could swim in that sea, he didn't know; he only knew that the sea that had been after him at odd times for forty-odd years was after him again; and he wasn't going to let it get him so long as he had breath left to fight.

He was in oilskins with heavy inner and outer clothing under the oilskins, and he was wearing thick leather sea boots to his knees, which did not make for extra buoyancy in the water. He had a hard time of it trying to hold his head from going under so that he could breathe.

The sea was picking up the old Pelican and tossing her high. Andie caught a glimpse of her stern and smokestack swinging across the stars. He was at the moment flat on his back and wondering why the steamer remained so close to him—the seas by this should have carried him far astern. "She's makin' no headway again' the no'wester," he reasoned, and immediately knew he was wrong. They had been driving her all the way from Georges and the log showed four knots against it all that day—not too bad for an old hooker that had to bust herself to do ten knots in smooth water.

Andie felt himself being hauled along on his back, which was a queer thing too. "What's goin' on here?" he asked himself, at the same time seizing a chance to draw a fresh breath and let a yell out of him—a waste of strength, as he very well knew, against that gale of wind, but a man had to be doing his best always, and there was no telling—miracles did happen sometimes.

Something had hold of him by the left leg—what could it be? What could it be but the log line? He wiggled his left foot to find out about that, not too violently, fearing to wiggle it loose. He guessed that it had caught under the thick boot heel, run up over the instep and taken a half turn around his leg. He was still on his back, his left leg extended out in front of him, his foot held slightly out of water. "Careful, Andie, careful now, boy," he was saying to himself. "A hard kick o' that leg and the log line'll come clear and you be left adrift again."

He reached around under him and to one side with his left hand until he felt the log line. He could feel the line tautening and slacking as the ship would rush down a hill of water or come to a full stop almost when a heavy sea would meet her fair and check her headway. He waited his chance to take a turn of the slack around his woolen mitt. He then rolled over on his face and got a grip of it with his other mitted hand. He then kicked his foot clear of the log line. With his next good breath he started to haul himself toward the steamer. The line kept slipping through his woolen mitts. He tossed the mitts away. It was a cold—a winter northwester is always cold—and he knew he would be liking the feel of those mitts on his hands later—if nothing happened him—but the need now was to get to the steamer as fast as he could.

The short, round-bellied *Pelican* was a buoyant craft. A great thing, buoyancy; but Andie was wishing she wasn't quite so buoyant now. Half to the stars she looked to be riding the sea at times; and again she would go rushing down the hills of water into the hollows; and then her screw would come racing out of the water and give Andie a chill to think he might be drawn under her stern and he have his head or an arm cut off by the whirling blades.

Every now and again, when he could spare the breath, he would raise his head and yell: "Hi-i, aboard the *Pelican!* Hi Steve"—again knowing it a great waste of breath; but that was no reason for himself not doing what he could while he had breath left in him.

He pulled himself along. Hauling on sheets and halyards and trawls and rowing a dory and pitching fish for near fifty years of his life had developed an amazing endurance and power in his arms and shoulders. Yet for all that, when the log line would slacken and then suddenly tauten and fetch up with a jerk under the rush of the ship, he could almost feel the arms being pulled out of him.

He had been perhaps one hundred and fifty feet astern of the steamer when the log line fouled him, a long, tough haul, but he found himself at last under the steamer's starboard counter. The log line was fastened to a bitt on her starboard quarter, from where it ran through a chock in her stern rail.

He looked up at the rail, and it did look high above him. Could he hoist himself aboard? The log line was of the usual sort—close braided, and of about the diameter and hardness of window sash cord. If it was a small hawser or a bit of deck line—something to fill a man's hand when he took hold of it!—but this slim, slippery thing!

Or if the sea would only stay quiet for a while! But it was now high up and now low down, and he having to keep an eye always out for the whirling screw.

He took a fresh turn of the line around his left hand and lifted. The sea water by now had seeped through his oilskins to his heavy clothes and underwear, making quite an extra weight to lift. However, he lifted with his left hand, took a grip of the line higher up with his right hand and again lifted; but his hands by now were numb from the cold sea water and the colder winter wind—he couldn't hold the grip. The thin, hard, icy line slipped through his half-frozen fingers.

He tried it again and slipped back. He tried it twenty times, and always he slid back. He stopped to get a fresh breath, wondering to himself what had become of Steve, why he hadn't had the steamer hove to when he saw him—he must've seen him, of course—being washed overboard. If he hadn't seen him being washed overboard, why wasn't he all this time having a look around to see what'd become of him? He tried to reason that out while waiting to gather strength for another try to haul himself up the ship's side.

There must be a reason why Steve did nothing. What was it? Only one thing it could be. Steve must've been washed over too. That was it! Poor Steve! Well, that was fishing life. He took a fresh grip of the line and tried it again. No use. Back he came.

Outlined against the stars when he next looked up he saw the heads and shoulders of two men. They were leaning over the rail under the quarter boat. He waited for a half lull in the wind and yelled. It was such a yell as should have brought men from the bunks below, he thought; but never a sign from them that they heard him. He drew a long breath and yelled again. And again. No sign. It certainly was blowing an awful breeze o' wind when he couldn't make himself heard by men not twenty-five feet away.

He took another turn of the line around his left hand and once more tried to lift himself. And again. No use. He slid back, not yet ready to give up, but saying to himself: "Forty-odd years you hauled your trawls and stood your watches in the old sailin' fleet, and here you are lost off a steam fisherman's deck the first winter you tried steam fishin'. Y' ought to known when you was well off." He yelled again.

In the wheel house of the *Pelican* Tom Boyle was wondering where Andie and Steve were. On a cold night like this, one or the other of them should have been droppin' in, if it was only for a couple of minutes, to thaw out their half-frozen hands over the radiator. If it was the kind of a night they didn't want to leave the deck even for a minute or two, then one of 'em ought to have stuck his head inside the door, if it was only to say: "Well, boy, how goes it to-night?"

But no sign of them. He looked at the bulkhead clock. Half an hour almost since he had shouted through the megaphone at them. He hadn't heard their reply, he didn't expect to, in that wind and sea; but he had caught a glimpse of them, two shadows in the windward rigging like, which meant they were all right at that time. He'd been looking to see them, one or the other of 'em, moving around in the bows of her. The wheel-house being well forward on the *Pelican*, he would have been sure to see them through the wheel-house windows if they were in the bow; but no sign of them there either.

He peeked through the after airport; and no sign that he could see of them around the deck there. He was liking the look of things less and less. He reached for the engine room tube.

"Hullo! That you, Chief? No? Oh, that you, Johnnie? This Tom Boyle at the wheel. Seen anything of Andie and Steve in that end of the ship this watch? No? Well, I ain't seen either of 'em around deck for a half hour. I'm gettin' worried about 'em—seas been sweepin' her deck pretty reg'lar. How about you hoppin' up and takin' a look around deck?"

It was Johnnie Duncan who had answered the wheel-house call. He had been enjoying himself in the fo'c'sle until the crew had begun to turn in; he had then come aft to loaf awhile in the engine room. He was a passenger, the son of the owner, making a winter trip for the experience. He had been making off and on trips, winter and summer, since he was a boy. The word from Tom stirred him mightily. He gave the chief ten words of explanation, made his way up a ladder and out onto the port after passageway, the lee passageway between the house and the rail.

He made his way forward, calling as he went: "Hi, Andie!" —he was very fond of Andie—"Hi, Steve!" He made his way across the waist of the ship to the wheel-house, being careful never to let go one safe hold until he had a good grip of another, something solid, something that no sea would shake loose, like the rigging or a ring-bolt under the rail.

He peered around the wheel-house into the bows of her. No one there. He started aft.

He felt the deck beginning to lift under him; he saw her stern squatting. He could hear—and feel—all the water in the North Atlantic rolling up over her bow. He had already started through the starboard passageway. He broke into a run, and down the icy incline he skated. He turned the after corner of the house, and down the slope deck and into the lee scuppers of the after deck he went.

He was safe in the protection of the after end of the house. He stopped to draw breath. He felt something moving beside him. He felt around. It was a man's body.

It was Steve, babbling to himself when Johnnie helped him to find his feet.

"What happened you, Steve?"

"I dunno. I must 've hit my head on somethin'—this iron bitt here maybe—tryin' to get away from a sea that come aboard. There's a lump on my head the size of ——"

"Where's Andie?"

"He ain't around deck? No? Then he's gone—washed overboard. I thought I saw him goin' but I was so busy tryin' to get clear myself I didn't stop to do much lookin' around. We were makin' ready to secure the quarter boat. Andie was balanced on the ship's rail and this mountain of a sea come rollin' down. I hustled for the lee o' the house, but Andie—I guess he didn't have any lee handy except overboard. Poor Andie!"

Steve led the way to the quarter boat to show where Andie had been standing. They both stood by the rail, each with both arms wrapped around boat davits, peering down into the sea.

A low faint Hi-i! reached their ears.

Steve gripped Johnnie's arm. "Did y' hear that?"

"I heard it."

They caught it again, the faint Hi-i! when for a moment the roar of the wind moderated.

It came from the direction of the stern. They moved aft, stared down into the sea, and there was Andie. "I'm hangin' to the log line. Lower a rope's end and haul me 'board," shouted Andie.

Steve ran to the lazaretto, returned with a good length of rope, tied a running bowline in it. They lowered it to Andie, who wiggled his shoulders through the loop.

A sea came swooping down the deck. "Don't let go that log line!" shrieked Steve; and he and Johnnie, hanging to the rope's end, which they hadn't time to make fast anywhere, dodged back to the lee of the house.

The sea went swashing over the stern. They hurried back to the rail and hauled in Andie before another sea would come. He fell almost full length in the lee of the house, and laid there with not a move out of him.

"Stand by him, Steve, and I'll call the skipper," said Johnnie.

"Call the skipper? For what?" Andie had rolled onto his side and was looking up at Johnnie.

"To take over your watch so you can turn in."

"Johnnie"—Andie was getting up on his feet—"Johnnie, how long've you known me? How many fishin' trips we made together? Quite a few, yes. Remember when I'd let you come in the dory with me, you a little shaver, and let you try to haul the trawl? Remember? Yes? Then you oughter know me by now, Johnnie. And since when've you been thinkin' I'm the kind of a man who'd let somebody else stand my watch on a passage home—me with nothin' the matter except a few bucketfuls of water I swallered? Since when, Johnnie?"

Johnnie squeezed Andie's arm. "Perhaps I did speak too quick, Andie. But one thing you will do, won't you? You'll go for'ard, you and Steve, and throw some hot coffee into yourselves, won't you? I'll stand watch while you're gone."

"We'll do that," agreed Andie. "Come on, Stevie."

Andie led the way to the fo'c'sle. "'Sh-h," he warned, when

Steve stepped heavily down from the ladder. "'Sh-h, boy. Everybody's turned in."

The fo'c'sle lamp was burning low. Without turning it up, for fear the light might shine in some sleeper's eyes, they helped themselves to a mug of coffee from the big coffee pot that was always boiling, night or day, on the *Pelican's* galley stove.

"Grub and to spare, thank the Lord, on this old hooker always," whispered Andie. "I would no more sign on with a vessel that didn't have plenty grub than"—he couldn't think of a comparison severe enough. "Here, boy." He rummaged the sugar and condensed milk out of the grub locker and passed them to Steve. "And a mouthful o' cold meat won't do you a bit o' harm either, boy, while we're at it." He passed the meat platter over.

They had a second cup of coffee, moving cautiously around the galley so as not to wake the sleepers.

"Feelin' better now, boy?" whispered Andie.

"I got a lump over one ear that——"

"Never mind that, boy, so long 's it's the ear ain't gone. The lump'll melt away if you give it time. Nothin' like a couple o' mugs o' good hot coffee to put heart into a man on a cold night, is there? We'll go back now—— Say, was it you yelled for me to hang onto that log line a while ago? You did! Fine! I'd been hangin' onto that log line while the old hooker towed me through four or five miles of rough water. I'd be likely to let go it in a hurry, wouldn't I? Fine! And I been bank fishin' all my life. Since when'd you think I'd turned foolish? But let's go on deck—poor Johnnie, I'll bet, is soaked to his inside shirt by this time with those seas comin' over her bow. Come on."

They found Johnnie perched high in the forerigging, gazing earnestly over the ship's bow. He climbed down, shouting into Andie's ear. "They ought to be giving a man a croix-de guerre with seventeen palms for standing watch on a night like this."

"A man does have to watch out," admitted Andie. "And now you'll go below and turn in, boy—mind what I'm sayin'—and change into dry clothes. Here, wait a bit—did you bring some dry underwear with you?"

Johnnie had brought dry underwear along, so that was all right. He went below and turned in.

The crew stood only two hour watches on the *Pelican,* so Steve went off watch at midnight. With Andie and the skipper it was eight hours off and eight on; so Andie held the deck until relieved by the skipper at eight in the morning.

"Still blowin'?" commented the skipper.

"Still blowin', and still no'west."

"And she made some ice for herself in the night, didn't she?"

"She made plenty. And she'll make plenty more afore she sees Boston."

"By the looks of her now she'll be all ice," returned the skipper.

Andie made no mention of his being swept overboard. The skipper had enough to think of taking over the watch, and the iced-up deck of a heaving ship on a winter's morn was no place for gossip. Besides, he was beginning to feel weary and he wanted to get into dry underwear and a dry bunk and get in a good six or seven hours' sleep for himself.

The wind continued to make. Abreast of Cape Cod it was blowing eighty miles an hour.

Ordinarily, the *Pelican* would make the passage home from the southwest bank in twenty-four hours. It was seventy-five hours this trip before she tied up to the Boston Fish Pier. She was pretty well iced up by then. Other arriving craft were iced up, too, but Fish Pier judgment was that the old *Pelican* carried just a bit more ice around deck than any of 'em.

The waterfront man of *The Star-Record* drifted down the wharf, spied her, shouted: "Zowie! Look at this one. Better take four or five shots at her." This to a man with a camera trudging at his heels.

The *Pelican* got a price for her fish, her crew hoisted it out of the hold. Those not hoisting out fish had the job of pounding ice off her. By and by, they collected their share of the trip and had supper. Some went up town, some stayed aboard the vessel; these last to get a good night's sleep because she was putting out to sea after breakfast in the morning.

Johnnie Duncan, the owner's son, was one of those who stayed aboard, he yarning with such of the crew as would stay awake with him. Andie was one of those who went up town, and Johnnie did not see him again until next morning.

"Hello, Andie," cried Johnnie. "You must've come back aboard pretty late last night. Where'd you go?"

"We took in a movie—Steve an' me."

"How was it?"

"Wonderful. A Wild West picture. What desp'rate men some of 'em must 'a' been, Johnnie! Desp'rate, sir, desp'rate. An' tough? The things some of 'em go through an' live—— You wouldn't believe it, Johnnie!"

"Probably not," agreed Johnnie.

"And the movie actors themselves must be wonderful fuhlas."

"Some of 'em are pretty good, I guess," admitted Johnnie.

The waterfront man of *The Star-Record* came down the wharf with a copy of his paper in his hand. Johnnie motioned for the paper. The newspaper man passed it over.

Johnnie glanced at the front page; opened it up. On an inside page were some pictures. One was of an automobile lying fender deep in water.

"What happened her?" asked Andie. He was looking over Johnnie's shoulder.

"There's half a column about what happened her," answered Johnnie. "She skidded off the road and into a creek somewhere up the country. There was three feet of water in the creek and the owner of the car got wet to his hips wading to the bank of the creek." He paused, added gravely: "At the hour of going to press he was resting comfortably."

"Seems like a lot o' fuss to be makin' over a man gettin' his hips wet," observed Andie.

"How about that?" demanded Johnnie, with a grin, of *The Star-Record* man.

"Now, Mr. Duncan, I guess you know how about it without my telling you," retorted *The Star-Record* man. "He's a magnate, worth a hundred million dollars, and anything happening to a man worth that much has news value. You know that."

"Of course," agreed Johnnie.

"There's another photo that will interest you," said the news man. "Look! There! I got to be going along now." He departed.

"Look here, Andie, at this picture," said Johnnie.

Andie looked and saw a steam trawler tied up to a wharf. Her bows were of monstrous size from ice, her forestay was ice half-way to the masthead, her forerigging was thick with ice to above her sidelight boards. Her wheel-house was a solid cube of ice except for two tiny lights of glass in front. It was ice, ice, everywhere ice on her. Under the photo was the caption:

A PICTURESQUE SIGHT: HOME FROM THE FISHING BANKS

"Picturesque!" murmured Johnnie. "As if she were some snow house in a winter carnival."

"Why, that's us—the *Pelican*," exclaimed Andie.

"Sure."

"But where's it give her name? Wouldn't you think they'd give her a name?"

"Her name wouldn't mean anything to the reading public, Andie. Let's see if there's a word of her crew getting their hips wet or anything like that. M-m-m—— Nothing on this page, nor here, no—— I don't see anything, Andie. Oh, yes, here's something about her."

On an inside page, buried among the small want and apartment to rent ads, was a list of the arrivals at the Fish Pier on the previous day. Thirty-odd vessels and steamers had come in, and in a column by themselves, in the smallest type the paper used, were their names and the weight of fish they brought in. Johnnie passed the paper over, so that Andie might read it for himself, and Andie read:

*Pelican* (Stmr.) Haddock 70,000 Cod 10,000

"What d'y' say about that after your winter trip? Don't it jar you?" demanded Johnnie.

"It does kind of," admitted Andie. "Seventy thousand haddock? She weighed out 72,000 o' haddock and 11,000 o' cod. Wouldn't you think they'd give her what's comin' to her?"

The skipper came along then, cast a weather-wise glance at the sky, drew out his watch. "Eight o'clock. Crew all here, Andie?"

"All here."

"Might's well go then, I guess."

And out she put for Georges Shoals once more, to battle night and day, it might be, with fog, snow, sleet, high winds and seas—whatever the winter banks might hold for them. And then it would be home again—if nothing happened her—a night ashore, and out to sea again.

"And not a soul in the world, except those of us who know you, to ask a single question about it, except how much fish did you bring in?" So Johnnie thought, and so he murmured, hailing Andie and the *Pelican* fair wind as they passed out of the slip.

He still held the morning paper in his hand. He looked at it: "News value! Got his hips wet! And Andie? O well!" He twisted the paper into a roll, tossed it into the slip.

## HAIL AND FAREWELL

O men with sea blood in your veins, O men o' Gloucester town,
With ye I've fished o'er many banks and sailed the compass roun';
I've messed with ye and bunked with ye and watched with ye, all three,
And better shipmates than ye were I never hope to see:
I've seen ye in the wild typhoon beneath a southern sky,
I've seen ye when the northern gale drove seas to masthead high;
But southern breeze or northern blow, to Hatt'ras or Cape Race,
I've yet to see ye with the sign o' fear upon your face.

There's a gale from out the heavens and there's froth upon the sea,
And peering out the window is the wife o' mine for me;
And driving her for Gloucester maybe we don't know
What the little ones are thinking when their mother looks out so!—
West half north and drive her, we're abreast now of Cape Sable,
It's an everlastin' breeze o' wind, but here's the craft that's able!—
When you get to thinking that way, don't it make you heart's blood foam?
Be sure it does, so here's a health to those we love at home!

O the roar of shoalin' waters, and the awful, awful sea,
Busted shrouds and parted cables, and the white death on our lee!
That black, black night on Georges when eight score men were lost—
Were ye there, ye men o' Gloucester? Aye ye were, and tossed
Like chips upon the water were your little craft that night,
Driving, battling, calling out, but ne'er a call o' fright:
So, knowing ye for what ye are, ye Masters of the Sea,
Here's to ye, men o' Gloucester, here's a health to ye from me.

28 Days

DATE DUE

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WITHDRAWN

FICTION
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1868-1957.
Gloucestermen

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